

4809

# CRADLE TALES OF HINDUISM

BY

THE SISTER NIVEDITA

(MARGARET E. NOBLE)

AUTHOR OF "THE WEB OF INDIAN LIFE," ETC.

PART I

*NEW IMPRESSION*

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

HORNBY ROAD, BOMBAY

6 OLD COURT HOUSE STREET, CALCUTTA

167 MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS

LONDON, NEW YORK AND TORONTO

1925

TO  
ALL THOSE SOULS  
WHO HAVE GROWN TO GREATNESS BY  
THEIR CHILDHOOD'S LOVE OF  
THE MAHABHARATA

*Made in Great Britain*



## PREFACE

IN the following stories, it may be worth while to point out, we have a collection of genuine Indian nursery-tales. The only discretion which I have permitted to myself has been that sometimes, in choosing between two versions, I have preferred the story received by word of mouth to that found in the books. Each one, and every incident of each, as here told, has one or other of these forms of authenticity.

To take them one by one, the Cycle of Snake Tales is found in the first volume of the Mahabharata. The story of Siva is inserted as a necessary foreword to those of Sati and Uma. The tale of Sati is gathered from the Bhagavat Purana, and that of the Princess Uma from the Ramayana, and from Kalidas' poem of *Kumar Sambhava*, "The Birth of the War-Lord." Savitri, the Indian Alcestis, comes from that mine of jewels, the Mahabharata, as does also the incomparable story of Nala and Damayanti. In the Krishna Cycle, the first seven numbers are from the Puranas—works which correspond to our apocryphal Gospels—and the

## PREFACE

last three from the Mahabharata. The tales classed as those of the Devotees, are, of course, from various sources, those of Druwa and Prahlad being popular versions of stories found in the Vishnu Purana, while Gopala and his Brother the Cowherd is, I imagine, like the Judgment-Seat of Vikramaditya, merely a village tale. Shibi Rana, Bharata, and the two last stories in the collection, are from the Mahabharata. Of the four tales classed together under the group-name "Cycle of the Ramayana," it seems unnecessary to point out that they are intended to form a brief epitome of that great poem, which has for hundreds of years been the most important influence in shaping the characters and personalities of Hindu women. The Mahabharata may be regarded as the Indian national saga, but the Ramayana is rather the epic of Indian womanhood. Sita, to the Indian consciousness, is its central figure.

These two great works form together the outstanding educational agencies of Indian life. All over the country, in every province, especially during the winter season, audiences of Hindus and Mohammedans gather round the Brahmin story-teller at nightfall, and listen to his rendering of the ancient tales. The Mohammedans of Bengal have their own version of the Mahabharata. And in the life of every child amongst the Hindu

## PREFACE

higher castes, there comes a time when, evening after evening, hour after hour, his grandmother pours into his ears these memories of old. There are simple forms of village-drama, also, by whose means, in some provinces, every man grows up with a full and authoritative knowledge of the Mahabharata.

Many great historical problems, which there has as yet been no attempt to solve, arise in connection with some of these stories. None of these is more interesting than that presented by the personality of Krishna. In the cycle of ten numbers here given under his name, many readers will feel a hiatus between the seventh and eighth. Now about the year 300 B.C. the Greek writer Megasthenes, reporting on India to Seleukos Nikator of Syria and Babylon, states that "Herakles is worshipped at Mathura and Clisobothra (Krishnaputra?). It would be childish to suppose from this that the worship of the Greek Herakles had been directly and mechanically transmitted to India, and established there in two different cities. We have to remember that ancient countries were less defined, and more united than modern. Central and Western Asia at the period in question were one culture-region, of which Greece was little more than a frontier province, a remote extremity. The question is merely whether the worship of Herakles in Greece

## PREFACE

and Phœnicia, and of a Herakles (presumably known as Krishna) in India, does not point to some distant Central Asian progenitor, common to the two,—a mythic half-man, half-god, strong, righteous, and full of heroic mercy, who leaves his impress even on early conceptions of Siva, amongst Hindu peoples, to be transmitted in divergent forms, in long-echoing memories, to one and another of the Aryan peoples. If so, is the Krishna of the Return to Mathura, of the Snake Kaliya, of the Mountain and the Demons, the Indian version of this Central Asian Herakles?

We have thus to decide whether the Krishna of the Puranic stories here given, and the Krishna Partha Sarathi of the Mahabharata, are two, or one. On the answer to this depends a great deal of history. If they are two, is Krishna Partha Sarathi new at the time of the last recension of the Mahabharata, or is he some ancient hero of the Aryan peoples, with whom Krishna-Herakles is then fused, to become the popular vehicle of Vedic ideas? In the hands of highly-trained Indian scholars—competent as no foreigner could be to apply the tests of language and of theological evolution—it is my belief that these inquiries might receive reliable solutions. I doubt that alien opinions could ever be much more than interesting speculations. But, in any case,



## PREFACE

the point of importance to our present purpose is that the story of his life, as here set forth, is that told to this day by the people amongst themselves.

My special thanks are due for the help afforded me in the preparation of this volume to the Hindu lady, Jogin-Mother—a kind neighbour, whose deep and intimate knowledge of the sacred literature is only equalled by her unfailing readiness to help a younger student—and to the Swāmi Saradananda of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur. The frontispiece, "The Indian Story-teller at Nightfall," to the complete edition and the Thunderbolt of Durga on the cover, are the work of the distinguished Indian artist, Mr. Abunendro Nath Tagore.

NIVEDITA,  
OF RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA.

CALCUTTA, *June 1907.*

## CONTENTS OF PART I

### THE CYCLE OF SNAKE TALES

	PAGE
THE WONDROUS TALE OF THE CURSE THAT LAY UPON THE SNAKE-FOLK: AND FIRST OF THE SERPENT REALM, BELOW THE EARTH	3
THE STORY OF THE DOOM OF PARIKSHEET .	9
THE SACRIFICE OF JANAMEJAYA . . . .	17

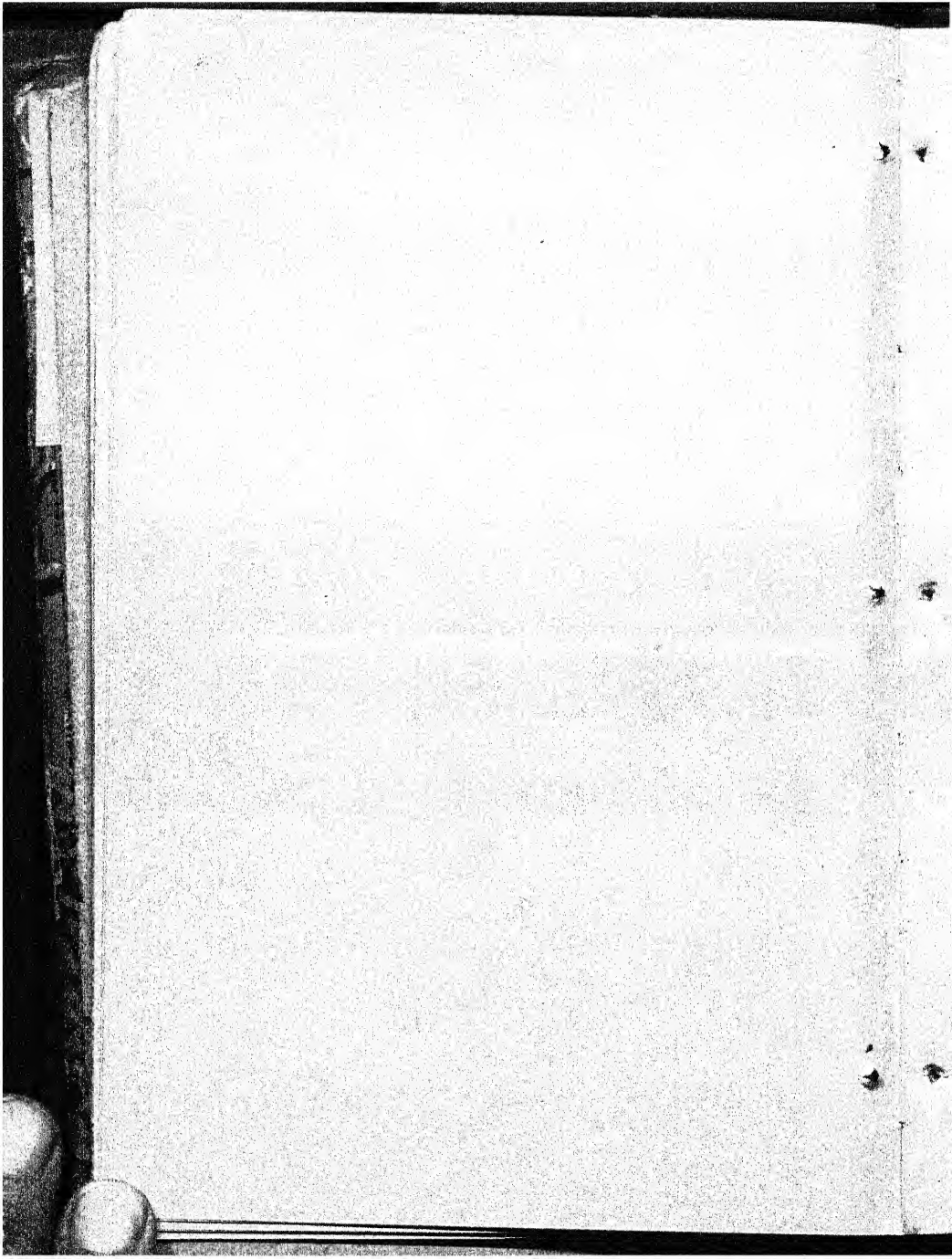
### THE STORY OF SIVA, THE GREAT GOD . 27

### THE CYCLE OF INDIAN WIFEHOOD

SATI, THE PERFECT WIFE. . . . .	35
THE TALE OF UMA HIMAVUTEE . . . .	44
SAVITRI, THE INDIAN ALCESTIS . . . .	53
NALA AND DAMAYANTI . . . . .	67

4809

THE CYCLE OF SNAKE TALES





## CRADLE TALES OF HINDUISM

The Wondrous Tale of the Curse that lay  
upon the Snake-Folk : and first of the  
Serpent Realm, below the Earth

IN the world of Eternity, below the earth, lies, as is known to all men, the realm of Takshaka, the Naga king, and about him dwell mighty snakes, hoary with age, and mysterious in power. And strange and beautiful is that Snake-world to see, though once alone has the eye of man been privileged to look thereon, even in the day when the youth Utanka, having been sent abroad on his teacher's service, and having eaten and drunk unwittingly of the nectar of immortality, was robbed of the tokens he carried by Takshaka, and followed him under the earth to recover them for his master.

For fearless and strong was the youth Utanka, disciple of mighty sages, and never was he known to flinch from danger, or to turn back because the task was arduous. Passing through great hardships and many difficulties, he had fared forth to bring to his teacher's wife two jewels

belonging to a certain Queen. "But mind," said his master at starting, "and mind," said the Queen, when she gave them, "these ornaments are greatly desired by Takshaka, King of Serpents. See that he rob you not of them by the way."

With high resolve, then, did the youth set forth, to return to his preceptor, bearing the jewels of the Queen. But as he went by the road he saw a beggar coming towards him, who, as he came, constantly appeared and disappeared. Then being athirst, and coming to a spring, Utanka placed his casket by the roadside, and bent to drink. At that very moment, however, the strange beggar turned into the terrible Takshaka, and seizing the packet glided swiftly away. But immediately Utanka understood, and, no way dismayed, followed after him. Then Takshaka disappeared through a hole in the earth. Yet even here the mortal was resolved to follow; so he seized a stick, and proceeded to dig his way after him. And it came to pass that Indra, the King of Gods, looked on, and saw that though the youth was high-hearted yet his tool was not sufficient, and he drove the strength of his own thunderbolt into the stick of Utanka, till the earth itself gave way before the mortal, and he pressed forward through a winding tunnel, into the Serpent-world. And when the passage ended, he found himself in a beautiful

## THE CURSE UPON THE SNAKE-FOLK 5

region, infinite in extent, and filled with palaces and mansions and gardens. And there were towers and domes and gateways innumerable, and in the gardens were lawns and wrestling-grounds, and all manner of provision for games and sports.

And it came to pass as he went onwards, that he saw two women weaving at a loom, and their shuttle was fine, and their threads were black and white. And he went a little further, and came to a great wheel, and it had twelve spokes, and six boys were turning it. And further still he met a man clad in black, riding on an immense horse.

Now when he had seen all these things, Utanka knew that he had come into a world of magic. Therefore he began to recite powerful spells, and when the man who rode on the horse heard him, he said, "Tell me, what boon dost thou ask of me?" And Utanka replied, "Even that the serpents may be brought under my control." Then said the man, "Blow into this horse." And Utanka blew into the horse. And immediately there issued from it smoke and flame so terrible that all the world of the serpents was about to be consumed. And Takshaka himself, being terrified for the fate of his people, appeared suddenly at the feet of the youth, and laid there the jewels he had stolen. And when Utanka had lifted them, the man said,

"Ride on this horse and he will in an instant bear thee to thy master's door." And the heart of Utanka was satisfied with seeing, and he desired nothing so much as to fulfil his master's errand, therefore he leapt on the horse, and in one moment found himself in the presence of his teacher, offering to him the tokens for which he had been sent.

And now understood Utanka what he had seen in the world of Eternity, beneath the world of men. For the loom was the loom of Time, and the black and white threads were night and day. And the wheel with the twelve spokes was the Year with its twelve months, and the six lads were the six seasons. And the man clad in black was Rain, and the horse on which he rode was Fire; for only when heat is controlled by water is the world of the serpents ever in contentment. "And well is it for thee, my child," said his master to Utanka, "that thou hadst eaten and drunk of the divine nectar, for without this spell of immortality, know that no mortal ever before emerged alive from the realms of Takshaka." And the heart of Utanka rejoiced greatly, and also he desired much to find some means to put an end to the race of serpents, so full of mysterious danger to the sons of men. And he resolved to make his way to the King, and prevail upon him to undertake a warfare against them.



## THE CURSE UPON THE SNAKE-FOLK 7

Now a strange and powerful curse lay upon the Snake-folk, and great fear dwelt therefore amongst them. Long, long ago, in the very beginning of time, it had happened that they increased very swiftly in numbers, and they were fierce and full of poison, and evermore at war with one another, and with the race of men. And the gods in high heaven trembled lest the Snake-folk should end forever the young race of Men-folk. And at that time it happened one day that Kadru, the Mother of Snakes, called on her children to obey her in some matter, but they, being wilful and mischievous, at first refused. Then did the heart of the Mother wax strong and full of anger, and thinking she spoke her own will, but really blinded by the fear that abode in the hearts of the gods, she opened her mouth and called down a curse on her own children. "All ye," she said, "shall perish in the fire-sacrifice that shall be made by Janamejaya, the great King!" Poor children! Poor Kadru! Surely never was anything so terrible as this, that the destruction of a whole race should be brought about by its own mother.

The awful prophecy was heard through all the worlds, and for a moment the kind gods were relieved that the race of the snakes was not to increase forever. But when they saw their distress, and when they looked also upon their beauty, their hearts were filled with pity, and they went

all together to Brahma the Creator, and spoke before him of the fierceness of Kadru's anger against these dear children, the Snake-folk, and begged him in some way to soften her fearful spell. And Brahma granted them that the cruel and poisonous serpents alone should be consumed, while the others, gentle and playful and affectionate, should escape. And then very softly, so that one little snake alone was able to hear, having crept up to lie near the feet of the Creator, he whispered, as if to himself, a promise of redemption. In the lapse of ages, he said, a maiden should be born of the Naga race, who should wed with the holiest of mortal men. And of this marriage should be born in due course a son, Astika, whose love from his birth should be all with his mother's people, and he should defeat the doom that lay upon them.

Now when this promise was published abroad in the realms of Takshaka, that whole world was greatly comforted ; and patiently, and yet sorrowfully, waited the Snake-folk, age after age. For they knew that their curse was terrible, yet that it was provided in the counsels of the Creator that when their terror should be at its greatest, Astika the Redeemer also should be ready, and should arise to bid their sufferings cease.

## The Story of the Doom of Pariksheet

SILENT, silent, in the forest sat the *rishi* Shamika. Long had he sat thus, motionless, in the shade of the huge trees, observing the vow of silence, and to no man would he speak, or return any answer. Only about his feet played the forest creatures, fearless and unharmed, and not far off grazed the cattle belonging to the *Ashrama*.

Now it happened one day while the *rishi* was under the vow, that Pariksheet the King came hunting through that very forest. And he was a great hunter and loved the chase. Neither had any deer, hunted by him, ever yet escaped in the woods with its life. But to-day the allurements of destiny was upon the King, so that he had been successful only in wounding a fleet stag which had fled before him. Thus, following on and on, and yet unable to overtake his quarry, he was separated from his retinue, and as the day wore on, came suddenly, in the remoter reaches of the forest, upon the hermit Shamika, sitting absorbed in meditation.

"Saw you a deer which I had wounded?"

cried the King. "Tell me quickly which way it went!" His face was inflamed with eagerness, and his clothing and jewels displayed his high rank. But though the saint evidently heard his questions, he answered never a word.

Pariksheet could hardly believe his own senses, that one to whom he addressed a question should refuse to answer. But when he had repeated his words many times, all the energy of the royal huntsman turned into bitter anger and contempt, and seeing a dead snake lying on the earth, he lifted it on the end of an arrow, and coiling it round the neck of the hermit, turned slowly about, to make his way homewards. It is said by some that ere the King had gone many paces, he realised how wrongly he had acted in thus insulting some unknown holy man. But it was already too late. Nothing could now avert the terrible destiny which his own anger was about to bring upon him, and which was already creeping nearer and nearer to destroy.

To Shamika the hermit, meanwhile, insult and praise were both alike. He knew Pariksheet for a great king, true to the commonwealth, and to the duties of his order, and he felt no anger at the treatment measured out to him, but sat on quietly, absorbed in prayer, the dead snake remaining as it had been placed by the hunter's arrow. And even thus was he still



sitting, when his son Sringi returned from distant wanderings in the forest, and was derided by some of his friends and companions for the insult that the King had offered, unhindered, to his father.

Now Sringi's mind was of great power, fully worthy of Shamika's son. Not one moment of his time, not the least part of his strength, was ever wasted in pleasure. His mind and body, his words and deeds and desires, were all alike held tight, under his own control. Only in one thing was he unworthy, in that he had not the same command as his father Shamika over the feeling of anger. For he was apt to spend the fruits of long years of austerity and concentration, suddenly, in a single impulse of rage. Yet so great was he, even in this, that the words which he spoke could never be recalled, and the earth itself would assist to make good that which was uttered by him in wrath.

When, now, he heard the story of how the King, while out hunting, had insulted his aged father, the young hermit stood still, transformed with grief and anger. His love and tenderness for Shamika, his desire to protect him, in his old age, from every hurt, with his own strength, and his reverence for the vow of silence, all combined to add fuel to the fire of rage that seemed almost to consume him. Slowly he opened his lips to speak, and the words ground themselves out

between his teeth. "*Within these seven days and nights, the life of the man who hath put this shame upon my father, shall be taken from him, by Takshaka himself, the King of Serpents.*" A chill wind passed over the listening forests as they heard the curse, and far away on his serpent-throne the terrible Takshaka felt the call of the young sage's anger, and, slowly uncoiling his huge folds, began to draw nearer and nearer to the world of men.

Shamika's vow of silence came to end with his son's return. But when he was told of the curse just uttered, he was full of sorrow. "Ah, my son," he cried, "our King is a great king, true to the duties of his order and the commonweal, and under his protection it is that we of the forest-ashramas dwell in peace, pursuing after holiness and learning. Ill doth it befit hermits to pronounce the doom of righteous sovereigns. Moreover, mercy is great, and forgiveness beautiful. Let us, then, forgive!"

The deep sweetness and serenity of the old saint flowed like a healing stream over the troubled spirit of his son, and tenderly Sringi stooped, to remove the unclean object from about his father's neck. But the words that had just been spoken had been too strong to be recalled, so when Shamika understood this he despatched a secret messenger to the King, to warn him of the danger that was hanging over him.

Then the King, Pariksheat, having heard from the messenger that the *rishi* whom he had insulted had been under a vow of silence, and hearing also that it was the sage himself who had sent him the friendly warning, was filled with regret for his own deed. Yet inasmuch as no sorrow could now avail to save him, without the utmost vigilance on his own part, he hastened to take counsel with his ministers. And a king's dwelling house was made, into which no living thing could enter unperceived, and the house was set up on a single, column-like foundation, and Pariksheat shut himself into it, determined that, until the seven days and nights had passed, he would transact both business and worship within its shelter, and seek no pleasure outside.

But now the rumour of approaching disaster to the King began to go forth amongst his people. And as Takshaka drew near to the royal refuge, he overtook a Brahmin hurrying through the forest in the same direction as himself. Recognising the Brahmin as Kasyapa, the great physician for the cure of snake-bite, and being suspicious of his errand, Takshaka entered into conversation with him. He quickly found that it was even as he had thought. Kasyapa was hastening to the court, in order to offer his services in restoring the King, when he should be bitten according to the doom.

Takshaka smiled, and laying a wager with Kasyapa that he knew not how powerful his poison was, he selected an immense banyan-tree, and rearing his head, struck at it with his poison-fang. Immediately the great tree, with all its roots and branches, was reduced to ashes lying on the ground.

But how much greater is healing than destruction! That wise Brahmin, not in the least dismayed, stepped forward, and lifting up his hands pronounced strange words, full of peace and benediction. And instantly the banyan-tree began to grow again. First came the tender sprout, with its two seed-leaves, and then the stem grew and put forth fresh buds, and next were seen many branches, till at last the whole tree stood once more before them, even as it had at first been—a lord of the forest.

Then Takshaka offered great wealth and many treasures to that master of healing, if only he would desist from his mission and leave his King to die. And the Brahmin seated himself for awhile in meditation, and having learnt, in his heart, that the curse on Pariksheet would really be fulfilled, since his destiny would thereby be accomplished, he accepted the treasures of Takshaka, and consented to remain behind. And the great serpent journeyed on through the forest alone, smiling to himself over the secret bonds



of Fate, spun, as these are, out of a man's own deeds.

Safe in the royal refuge the King had passed six days and nights, and now the seventh had come, nor as yet had any snake been so much as seen. For it is ever thus. Only when men have ceased to fear do the gods send their messengers.

Now, as the day wore on, the King's heart grew light, and towards the decline of the sun there came to the door of the mansion a party of strange fellows, who seemed to be forest-dwellers, bearing presents of fruits and flowers for the royal worship. And Pariksheet being graciously disposed, received the newcomers, and, asking not their names, accepted their offerings.

When they had gone away, however, the King, and his friends and his ministers who were seated about him, felt an unwonted hunger for the fruit that had just been brought, and with much laughter and mirth proceeded to eat it. And in that which was taken by Pariksheet himself he saw, when he broke it open, a tiny copper-coloured worm with bright black eyes, but so small as to be almost invisible. At this very moment the sun was setting, and the seven nights and days of the doom were almost ended. Pariksheet therefore had lost all fear, and began to regret having paid so much attention to the hermit's message. So, the infatuation of destiny being now fully upon



him, he lifted the creature out of the fruit, and said to it playfully, "Unless you, O little maggot, be the terrible Takshaka, he is not here. Show us, therefore, what *you* can do!" Every one laughed at the sally, and even as the King, a week before, had placed a dead snake contemptuously on the *rishi's* neck, so now, in the spirit of mockery, he lifted the insignificant worm to the same position at his own throat.

It was the last act of Pariksheet. Instantly, challenged thus by the sovereign's own word, the seeming maggot changed its form before the eyes of the terrified ministers, becoming in one moment vaster and vaster, till it was revealed as the mighty serpent, Takshaka himself. Then coiling himself swiftly and tightly about the King's neck, and raising his huge head, Takshaka fell upon his victim with a loud hiss, and bit him, causing instant death.

## The Sacrifice of Janamejaya

Now the child Janamejaya succeeded to the crown of his father Pariksheet, and wise counsellors surrounded his throne and ruled the kingdom in his name. And thus quietly passed the years in which the young man was growing to manhood. Far away in the forest, moreover, was growing up at this very time a strange and silent youth, by name Astika, whose father had been the holiest of mortal men, and his mother the sister of a king among the gentler tribes of Snake-folk. And Astika was a man, of the nature of his father, very saintly and lovable, and full of wisdom. But he had lived all his life in the snake-realm in the forest. For his father had gone away, leaving his mother, even before he was born. So all his heart was with his mother's people and with his childhood's home. Here, then, were the two children of destiny, both of the same age, both fatherless, both born to be world-changers—Janamejaya the King, and Astika the Snake-man, Brahmin, and saint. And those were the days of the power of Takshaka, the Mighty Lord of Serpents.

Now it came to pass, on a day when the young King Janamejaya had grown to manhood, that there came to him one whose name was Utanka, crying, "Avenge! avengel the time is come! Viseh on the great serpent Takshaka thy father's death." And the King began to ask eager questions as to why he was fatherless, and how his father, Pariksheet, being the noblest of kings, had met his death. But when they told him the story of the hermit Shamika and his son Sringi, and of the King's mansion built on a single column, and the copper-coloured insect concealed in a fruit, the mind of the young King put aside all the minor circumstances and fixed on the thought of the great Takshaka as the enemy of the royal house. And he began to brood over the duty of avenging the death of his father and protecting the world of men from the enmity and mischief of the whole serpent race. And behold when the King's purpose had grown deep, he raised his head, and said to his court of priests and counsellors, "The time is come! now do I desire to avenge the death of Pariksheet, my father, by causing Takshaka and all his people to be consumed together in a blazing fire, even as Takshaka himself burnt up my father in the fire of his poison. Tell me then, ye wise men, and tell me, ye my ministers, how may I proceed to carry out this vow?"

And lo, when these words were heard in the

King's court, a shudder ran through all the world of the Snake-folk. For this was the moment foretold in the curse that had lain from of old upon their race. Janamejaya was that king for whom the ages had waited. Now was the hour of their peril at hand, nay, even at the very door. And the Snake-princess began to watch for the right moment, when she must call upon her son Astika to arise and save her race. And because for the purpose of this vow had Janamejaya the King been born, therefore all power and all knowledge was found among his advisers. They questioned the scholars and consulted all the ancient books. And all was finally decided, as to the manner in which a royal sacrifice must be performed, for the purpose of burning up all the snakes including even the great Takshaka himself. All the preparations began accordingly. A piece of land was chosen and an immense altar built, and all the vessels and ornaments were brought together. A great army of priests was gathered, the fire was ready, and the rice and butter that would be thrown into the sacrificial fire were stored up. But when all things were ready, it began to be whispered that the altar-builders had noted certain omens which indicated that a stranger would come and bring about the defeat of the sacrifice. So when the King heard this he gave orders, before sitting down on his throne, that the gates were to be

closed, and no stranger on any account to be admitted.

And now at last the sacrificial fire was lighted, and the priests, chanting together the proper texts and verses, began to pour the libations of clarified butter upon the flames. Oh how strange and terrible was the sight next seen! So great was the power of the minds that were concentrated upon the sacrifice, that from everywhere near and far away the snakes began to come, flying through the air, crawling along the ground, and dropping from the sky, to throw themselves of their own accord upon the fire. On and on they came, hundreds and thousands and even millions in number, writhing, struggling, and hissing in their terror; striving to resist the terrible power that was drawing them onwards; but all yielding to it and giving themselves to the fire in the end. And still the fires grew hotter and the flames brighter, and the chanting of the priests rose higher and higher; for their power must go out into the uttermost parts of the universe, and lay hold on the great Takshaka himself, to draw him into the consuming flames. Keenest and most intense of all their minds was that of the King. His face was dark and sombre, and his eyes never wavered as he sat there on his throne, following with all his strength the mighty spells that the priests were chanting, in order to bring



Takshaka himself into their power, and drag him into the midst of the fire; for the royal passion of blood-revenge had awakened in him, and he thirsted for the life of his father's murderer. So the priests chanted, and the King watched, and far away the gate of the sacrificial grounds was held by a trusted officer, whose only fault was that he could never refuse to a Brahmin anything he asked.

Hour after hour the sacrifice went on. But now a strange murmur began to be heard. Takshaka, it was said, had fled from his own kingdom and found sanctuary in the throne of Indra, God of the Sky, and King of all the Gods.

"I care not!" cried Janamejaya, springing to his feet, with shining eyes. "For Takshaka there shall be no quarter. Let the throne of Indra itself fall into the fire and be burnt to ashes!" The earth was thrilled to her very core, as, far up in the skies, appeared after these terrible words, a faint black spot, and all nature knew that the throne of the God of Heaven was being drawn into the sacrifice. Coiled tightly about it, and hidden by the robes of Indra, was Takshaka, and as long as he sheltered him, not even the King of Gods could resist the dread sentence thus pronounced by Janamejaya. Down and down, more and more swiftly through space, came the divine seat, and all eyes turned upwards, and all hearts seemed to

stand still, as they watched it drawing nearer to the royal flames. Then there was a convulsive struggle, and the throne of the Sky-father was seen to be rising again into the heavens, while suddenly the great form of Takshaka himself became visible, falling slowly but surely to his doom.

At that very moment a strange yet noble-looking Brahmin came forward to the throne of Janamejaya, saying, "O King, grant me a boon!" The King held up his hand to silence him a moment. His eyes were fixed on the mighty serpent, whirling downwards through the air. Till he was sure of victory he would grant no boons, though the gods themselves should be the suppliants. But when Takshaka had drawn so close that his end was inevitable, he turned to the stranger, according to the royal custom, and said, "Speak! for whatsoever thou askest do I grant unto thee!"

"Then," said the Brahmin, "let this sacrifice be stayed!"

The King started forward in dismay. But it was already too late. Already had the snakes ceased to fall into the fire. Already was the body of the great serpent disappearing in the distance. And the priests, finding their texts become suddenly unavailing, had ceased to chant, or to pour the sacred butter into the fire. For even as the

builders had prophesied, a stranger—no other than Astika, the Snake-Brahmin—had entered the sacrificial grounds during the ceremonies, and now, by the word of the King himself, had brought to nought the intention of the sacrifice. And this entrance of the Brahmin had been the one matter in which the King's officer at the gate had had no power to obey his sovereign's orders. For, as was known to every one, the habit of his whole life had been, never to refuse to a Brahmin anything he asked.

But when Janamejaya had heard everything ; when Astika had told him of the curse of Kadru that lay upon the Snake-folk, and the promise of a redeemer who should save all but the fiercest and most dangerous of his mother's people ; when he told him, too, of his own birth for this very purpose ; of the great fear and sadness that had fallen upon the Serpent-world at the commencement of the royal sacrifice, and of his mother's calling upon him, Astika, to save her kindred, then did anger and disappointment vanish from the heart of the King. He saw men as they really are, merely the sport and playthings of destiny. He understood that even the death of his father, Pariksheet, by the poison of Takshaka, had happened, only in order to bring about the will of the gods. And he turned round to bestow on Astika rich presents and royal favours. But already was

the mission of Astika ended among mortals, and he had withdrawn, unnoticed, from the court of the King, to spend the remainder of his days in the forests, among the kinsmen of his mother, in his childhood's home

**THE STORY OF SIVA, THE  
GREAT GOD**





## The Story of Siva, the Great God

IN wild and lonely places, at any time, one may chance on the Great God, for such are His most favoured haunts. Once seen, there is no mistaking Him. Yet He has no look of being rich or powerful. His skin is covered with white wood-ashes. His clothing is but the religious wanderer's yellow cloth. The coils of matted hair are piled high on the top of His head. In one hand He carries the begging-bowl, and in the other His tall staff, crowned with the trident. And sometimes He goes from door to door at midday, asking alms.

High amongst the Himalayas tower the great snow-mountains, and here, on the still, cold heights, is Siva throned. Silent—nay, rapt in silence—does He sit there, absorbed and lost in one eternal meditation. When the new moon shines over the mountain-tops, standing above the brow of the Great God, it appears to worshipping souls as if the light shone through, instead of all about Him. For He is full of radiance, and can cast no shadow.

Wrapped thus into hushed intensity lies Kailash,

above Lake Manasorovarā, the mountain home of Mahadeva, and there, with mind hidden deep under fold upon fold of thought, rests He. With each breath of His, outward and in, worlds, it is said, are created and destroyed. Yet He, the Great God, has nothing of His own; for in all these that He has created there is nothing—not kingship, nor fatherhood, nor wealth, nor power—that could for one moment tempt Him to claim it. One desire, and one alone, has He, to destroy the ignorance of souls, and let light come. Once, it is said, His meditation grew so deep, that when He awoke He was standing alone, poised on the heart's centre of all things, and the Universe had vanished. Then, knowing that all darkness was dispelled, that nowhere more, in all the worlds, was there blindness or sin, He danced forward with uplifted hands, into the nothingness of that uttermost withdrawnness, singing, in His joy, "Bom! Bom!" And this dance of the Great God is the Indian Dance of Death, and for its sake is He worshipped with the words "Bom! Bom! Hara! Hara!"

It is, however, by the face of the Great God that we may know Him once for all, beyond the possibility of doubt. One look is enough, out of that radiance of knowledge, one glance from the pity and tenderness in His benign eyes, and never more are we able to forget that this whom we

saw was Siva Himself. It is impossible to think of the Great God as being angry. He "whose form is like unto a silver mountain" sees only two things, insight and want of insight, amongst men. Whatever be our sin and error, He longs only to reveal to us its cause, that we may not be left to wander in the dark. His is the infinite compassion, without one shadow or stain upon it.

In matters of the world, He is but simple, asking almost nothing in worship, and strangely easy to mislead. His offerings are only bel-leaves and water, and far less than a handful of rice. And He will accept these in any form. The tears of the sorrowful, for instance, have often seemed to Him like the pure water of His offering. Once He was guarding a royal camp at night, when the enemy fell upon Him, and tried to kill Him. But these wicked men were armed with sticks of bel-wood, and as they beat Him again and again with these, He, smiling and taking the blows for worship, put out His hand, and blessed them on their heads!

He keeps for Himself only those who would otherwise wander unclaimed and masterless. He has but one servant, the devoted Nandi. He rides, not on horse or elephant, but on a shabby old bull. Because the serpents were rejected by all others, did He allow them to twine about His neck. And amongst human beings, all the crooked and hunch-



backed, and lame and squint-eyed, He regards as His very own. For loneliness and deformity and poverty are passwords sufficient to the heart of the Great God, and He, who asks nothing from any one, Who bestows all, and takes nothing in return, He, the Lord of the Animals, Who refuses none that come to Him sincerely, He will give His very Self, with all its sweetness and illumination, merely on the plea of our longing or our need!

Yet is this not the only form in which Siva may come to the soul of man. Sometimes the thing that stands between us and knowledge is unspeakably dear. Yet is the Great God ever the Destroyer of Ignorance, and for this, when our hour comes, He will arise, as it were, sword in hand, and slay before our eyes our best beloved. In the middle of His brow shines forth the great Third Eye of spiritual vision, with which He pierces to the heart of all hypocrisy and shams. And with the light that flashes from this eye, He can burn to ashes at a glance that which is untrue. For foolish as He may be in matters of the world, in spiritual things He can never be deceived. In this aspect, therefore, He is known as Rudra the Terrible, and to Him day after day men pray, saying, "O Thou the Sweetest of the Sweet, the Most Terrible of the Terrible!"

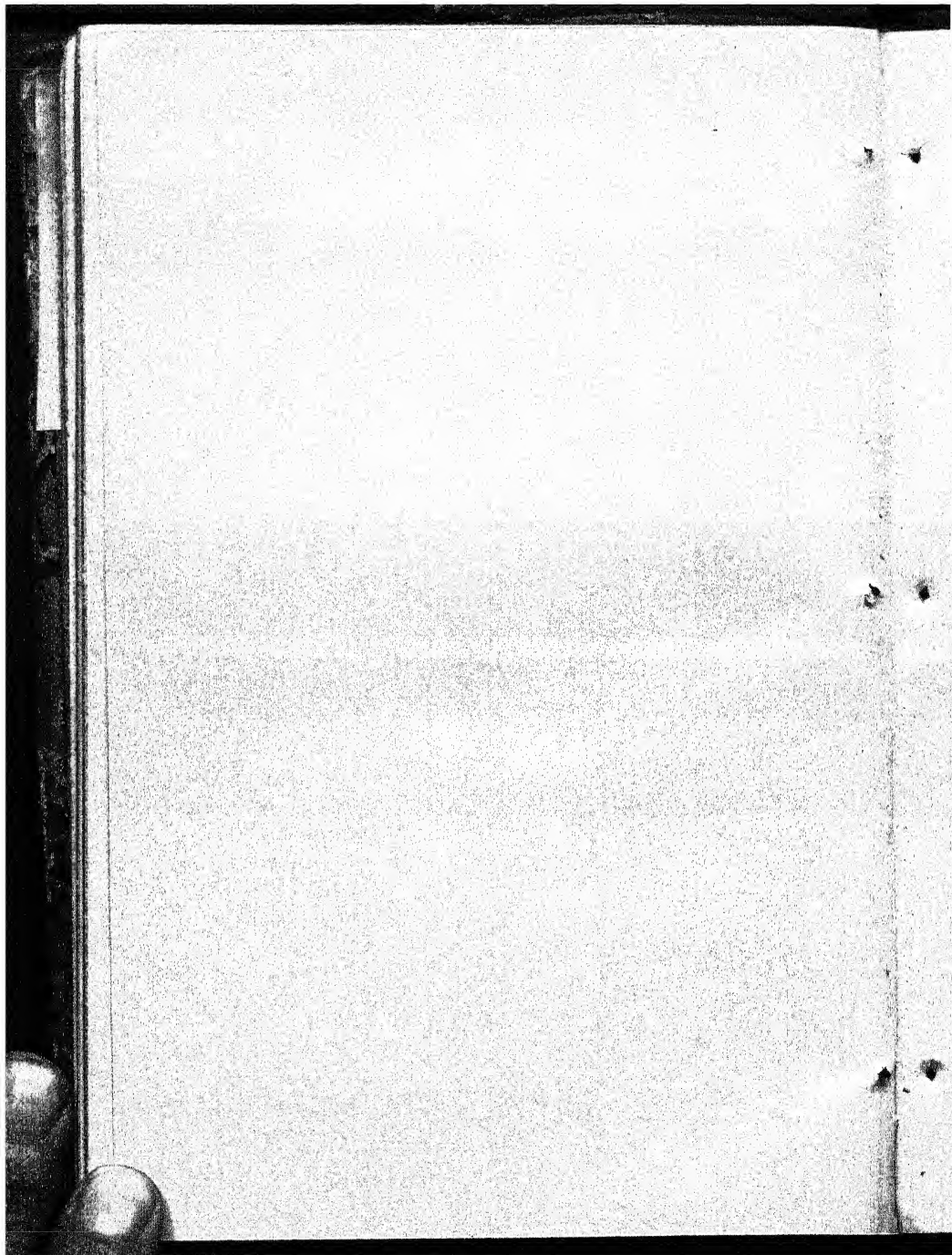
So runs the tale. And yet in truth this thought



## STORY OF SIVA, THE GREAT GOD 31

of the Great God is but half of that conception which is known to the intuition of man as the divine. Two things there are which we see as God. One is knowledge, insight—*Jnanum*, as it is called in India—and this, carried to its utmost height, is Siva or Mahadeva. But some see God rather in power, energy, beauty, the universe about us. Indeed, without both of these, either becomes unthinkable. Hence Siva has ever a consort in Maha Sakti, the Primal Force. Amongst the pictures made, and the tales told, of Her, are those of Sati, and Uma, and the Great Death. She is Gouri, the Golden One, the fair, the light of the sunrise shining on the mountain snows. And she dwells ever in Kailash, as the wife and devoted worshipper of that Mahadeva, or Spiritual Insight, who goes amongst men by the name of Siva, the Great God.

THE CYCLE OF INDIAN  
WIFEHOOD



## Sati, the Perfect Wife

LONG, long ago, in the beginning of time, there was a god called Duksha, who counted himself chief of divinities and men. And it happened once that a great feast was held, and all the gods at the banquet did homage to Duksha, and acknowledged him as Overlord, ~~S~~ave one, Siva. He, the Great God, was present also, and was clad indeed like any beggar, in ashes and pink loin-cloth, with staff and bowl. Yet He would not bow down and touch the feet of Duksha. His motive was pure kindness. We all know that there is nothing more unlucky for an inferior than to see one greater than himself prostrated before him. It is even said in India that if this occurs to you, your head will at once roll off. So out of sheer mercy to the Overlord, Siva could not do homage, and probably afterwards forgot all about the occurrence. But the poor god did not understand His reason, and thenceforth counted Him his enemy, hating Him with all his heart. Now Duksha had had many daughters, but they were by this time all married, except the youngest, who was so good that she was known as *Sati*. (For



the word *Sati* means *being, existence*, and nothing really, you know, exists but goodness !)

In secret Sati's whole soul was given up to the worship of the Great God. She adored the image of Siva day after day, and offered before it water and white rice, praying that her whole life might be passed in loving Him, and Him alone.

In the midst of all this, Duksha declared that it was time for her to be married, and announced a *Swayamvara*, or feast of the Bride's Choice. Poor Sati ! How could she marry any one else when her whole heart was given to the Great God ? But the fatal day arrived. In a vast court, on splendid thrones, sat all the kings and gods who had been invited, in a great circle. Sati came in, with her wedding garland in her hand. All round she looked. She could tell which were gods, because they were lighted from within, so they neither winked nor cast shadows, and which kings, for they did. Both were there, and she might choose any one of them. He would be happy, and her father would be glad. They glittered with jewels and were gay with gorgeous-coloured robes. Again and again she searched the place with her eyes, but He whom she looked for was not there. It was a terrible moment.

Then in her despair, Sati stood still in the midst of the hall, and threw her flowers up into the



air, saying, "If I be indeed Sati, then do thou, Siva, receive my garland!" And lo! there He was in the midst of them, wearing it round His neck!

Her father, Duksha, was choking with rage, but what could he do? The choice of a princess was final. So the wedding ceremonies had to be completed. When that was done, however, he called her to him. "Undutiful child!" he cried, "you have yourself chosen this beggar for your husband. Now go and live with Him, a beggar's wife, but never come back to me or look upon my face again!"

So Siva took her away to Kailash, and she was happier there than, in all the dreams and prayers of her girlhood, she had ever imagined. One day, however, the sage Narada, clothed in his pink robes and looking big with important news, came to call. He went up to Siva, sitting on a tiger-skin, deep in meditation, and sat down near Him to have a chat. "H'm!" he said, as soon as he thought he had Mahadeva's attention, "your father-in-law, Duksha, is arranging for a fine festival. There's to be a fire-sacrifice with full state-ceremonies, and all his family are invited."

"That's good!" said Siva, rather absently.

"But he hasn't asked you!" said Narada, eyeing him curiously.

"No," said Siva; "isn't that fine?"

"What!" said Narada, beginning to look

puzzled ; "don't you mind the insult, the terrible sacrilege, of offering royal worship without calling for the presence of the Great God ?"

"Oh !" said Siva wearily, "if only people would leave me out of everything, perhaps I could get rid of this burden of making and destroying worlds, and lose myself in one eternal meditation !"

Evidently it was impossible to get any fun out of a gossip here. Mahadeva was too grateful to His father-in-law for leaving Him in peace.

So Narada turned to tell the news to Sati. All her woman's curiosity was roused at once. A thousand questions had to be answered. She wanted to know about the preparations, and the guests, and exactly how the sacrifice and banquet were to be arranged. Finally saying, "But I must go too !" she turned to find her Husband, and Narada, feeling sure that events were afoot, hastened away.

Alone, in Kailash, Sati stood before Siva. "I want to go and see the feast !" she said.

"But," said He, "you are not asked !"

"No daughter could need an invitation to her father's house !" pleaded Sati.

"Yes," said Siva, "but you, My beloved, *must* not go. I fear for you the dreadful insults of those who hate Me."

Then, before the <sup>eyes</sup> ~~eyes~~ of the Great God, the

very face and person of Sati began to change. He had said "must" to her, and now she would show Him who and what she was, who loved and worshipped Him. So she assumed some of her great and terrible forms. She appeared to Him ten-handed, standing on a lion—Durga, the Queen and centre of the Universe. She showed herself as the gentle foster-mother of the worlds. She became the black and awful Goddess of Death. Till Mahadeva Himself trembled in Her presence and worshipped Her, in turn, as His own equal. Then she was the tender and devoted Sati once more, pleading with Him as a mortal wife with her husband. "Even as you declare," she said, "we are about to go through terrible events. But these things must be, to show mankind what a perfect wife should be. Moreover, how could harsh words hurt Her, who bears all things and beings in Her heart?"

So He yielded, and she, attended by the one old servant, Nandi, riding on their old bull, and wearing the rags of a beggar's wife, set off for the palace of her father, Duksha.

Arriving there at last, and entering the Hall of Sacrifice, she—the young and beautiful Sati of a few short years before, still young and even more beautiful, but arrayed in such strange guise—was greeted by peals of laughter from the assembled guests. They were her sisters, resplendent in silks

and jewels, each seated on the throne of her husband, on his left side.

There at the end of the hall, amongst priests and nobles, she saw Duksha about to begin the sacrifice. Sati went up and stood reverently before her father. When he saw her, however, Duksha became furious. "Ho, beggar's wife!" he said. "Why come you here? Did I not curse you, and drive you from my presence?"

"A father's curses are a good child's blessings," replied Sati meekly, stooping to the earth to touch his feet.

"Good children do not choose to marry beggars!" he replied. "Where is that Husband of yours? Thief, rascal, evil dishonest daughter-stealer that He is!"

He was going on to say more, but even he could not finish, for Sati, blushing crimson, had risen to her full height, and her beauty and sorrow made her wonderful to look upon. One hand was raised, as if to say, "Hush!"

"Words such as these, my father," she was saying, "the faithful wife must not even hear. These ears that have listened are yours. You gave them to me, for you gave me life, and all this body. Then take it back. It is once more your own. Not for one moment shall I retain it, at the cost of such dishonour."

And she fell dead at Duksha's feet. Every one



rose in horror, and the father himself stood as if turned to stone, aghast at the consequences of his own words. But there was no hope. The beautiful and faithful soul of Sati had indeed fled.

Then Nandi, her old attendant, set out swiftly for Kailash, to report to Siva what had happened. But as he did so, shaking in every limb, he turned round in the doorway and said, "If you, O Duksha, survive these deeds at all, may it be only with a goat's head on your human body!" In such great moments men see truly, even into the future.

Up in Kailash, Siva was hard to waken from His meditation. But when at last He heard and understood what Nandi had to tell, His wrath and grief were without measure. Putting His hand up to His head He pulled out a single hair, and cast it on the ground before Him. Up sprang a giant, armed for war. Him Siva made generalissimo of His hosts. Then He shook His matted locks, and out of them leapt a whole army of dwarfs, giants, and soldiers. These ranged themselves in order behind their leader, he behind Mahadeva, and all turned to march down upon the abode of Duksha.

When they reached it, the forces set to work, cutting off the head of the King and wrecking the palace. But Siva made His way straight to the body of Sati, and taking it reverently on His shoulders would have left the place.



At this moment, however, came a woman, weeping and worshipping His feet. At length the sound of her voice penetrated to the ears of the grief-intoxicated God.

"Speak! Who worships Me?" He said.

"It is I, the mother of Sati!"

"Mother, what would you have?" said He very gently.

"Only that of your mercy; you will give back the life of my husband, Duksha."

"Let him live!" said Mahadeva at once, and His servants obediently restored the life taken.

But Duksha had no head, and his own could not be found. "This will do very well," said the general of the army, pointing to the head of the goat that had been slain for sacrifice; and some one seized it and put it on the body of Duksha. So there he really was, even as Nandi had said, surviving, but with a goat's head on his human body.

But Siva, bearing the body of Sati, strode forth in the grief of a God. To and fro over the earth He went. His eyes shot forth volcanic fires, and His footsteps shook the worlds. Then Vishnu, to save mankind, came behind Siva, and hurled His discus time after time at the corpse of Sati, till, falling piece by piece, with fifty-two blows it was at last destroyed, and Siva, feeling the weight gone, withdrew to Kailash, and plunged once more into His solitary meditation.

But of how Sati was born again as Uma in the house of Himalaya the king, of how she strove once more for the love of the Great God ; and of how Siva, with His whole heart on Sati, refused to be won, and burnt Eros to ashes with a glance, are not these things told, by Kalidas the poet, in his great poem of "The Birth of the War-Lord" ?

## The Tale of Uma Himavutee

Now Sati was born again on earth as the Princess Uma. In the divine regions, long periods of our time pass like a single day, and the years that were spent in becoming a baby and growing up into a woman seemed to Uma a very little thing. She knew well who she was, and remembered that she had come into the world only that she might win Siva once more for her own, and be with Him forever.

This time she had chosen as her father one who loved Mahadeva, and would feel deeply honoured by having Him for his son-in-law, Himalaya, the Mountain-king. Uma was extraordinary from her earliest years for her goodness. It was not only that every duty was faithfully performed, and those rites of purification that Siva loves carried out to the last letter, but such long hours were spent in worship and in fasts of terrible rigour, that her mother often implored her to stop, fearing that she would lose health, or even life itself. But the Princess persisted, for she knew that beautiful as she was, her great difficulty in this life would be to make

“

Siva forget Sati long enough even to look at her. She must therefore devote all her energy to the training of soul and will. Notwithstanding this, however, she grew daily more and more lovely. And this was not surprising, as you would say, if you could have seen those wonderful mountains that were her home. There the dark cedars toss their heads all night long against the sky, and wild roses and red pomegranate blossoms fill the summer with their beauty. There graceful trees and delicious fruits abound, and wild flowers bloom in profusion. There birds and beasts give thanks continually that they exist, and on the rugged mountain-tops the snows are as grand as the forests below are beautiful.

With eyes and ears always filled thus, what could a maiden do but drink in loveliness and draw closer to its spirit day by day?

But greatest of all her charms was that pale golden tint of skin that is so admired by Hindu women. Indeed, she was so renowned for this, that to this day only queens in India may wear anklets and ornaments of gold upon the feet. Subjects wear silver, because yellow is Uma's own colour, and to touch it with the foot is sacrilege.

Now when Uma was about eighteen, all the gods became as anxious as herself for the granting of her desire. Their interest in the matter



came about in this way:—Sometime before, Brahma, the Creator, had shown great favour to one of the demons, and granted him an unusual degree of power. In the strength of this gift the recipient had greatly exalted himself, and was threatening to usurp the thrones of all the lesser divinities. They appealed to Brahma, and told their story. The great four-headed Father listened to their woe, and smiled indulgently. "I cannot myself avenge your wrongs," he said, "upon one who has received my friendship. Do you not know the proverb, 'Even a poisonous tree should stand uninjured by him who planted it'? But as I look into the future, I see that when Siva marries the Princess Uma—and he can wed no other—he will become the father of a son who shall lead the armies of heaven to victory. Do what you can, therefore, to hasten the marriage. You are thereby bringing nearer the Birth of the Divine War-Lord."

The thunder-like voice of the Creator died away in space, and the gods consulted as to what could be done. In the end, Indra, chief of the lesser gods, went to visit Modon, the Indian God of Love.

He and his wife Roti had, living in their home, a faithful friend and soldier called Spring, and all three listened to the request that Indra had come to make. He wished Modon to shoot



one of his invisible arrows into the heart of Siva.

The tall and graceful young god turned pale when he understood at last what was wanted. It was believed in the divine world that the Great God was proof against mortal weakness, and the impertinence of attempting to inflict on Him the wound of human love was almost too much, even for these merry-hearted souls. They feared failure, and discovery, with the anger of Mahadeva.

Yet they had a strong affection for Indra, the God of the Sky. They owed him much. They were eager to serve him. At last said Modon, "If Spring will go before, and help me, as he has always hitherto done, I am willing to try," and this promise being extorted, Indra arose and left them ; but he told them first of the grove in which Siva would be found.

Now when Modon set forth to find Mahadeva, Spring went before. At his approach and the waving of his wand, all the trees in the forest broke into blossom without ever a green leaf. Then entered Modon, with his beautiful wife, Desire, and the world became warm with the friendship of the creatures. Birds warbled to each other, the wild deer drank out of the forest pools side by side ; the hum of insects rose on the breeze ; even the flowers seemed to pass under the

gracious influence, and bend buds and bells a little nearer.

On came the Archer, Love, in the footsteps of his friend, till, near the heart of the wood, he found what he sought—a magnificent old cedar, and spread beneath its shade a black leopard-skin for meditation. The next moment an old man appeared, and held up his hand, saying, "Hush!" It was Nandi. Instantly, perfect silence fell upon everything. The forest stood as if painted on the air. No breeze stirred a single leaf. The birds remained on the boughs, with throats opened to sing, but no sound came forth. The insects hung on the wing motionless, and the bees, drawing near to sip honey from the flowers of Modon's bow, made a thick line like a black arch above it, or covered the quiver, made of blossoms, like a veil, as still as death.

Then Modon saw a white form shine forth and take shape beneath the cedar. It was Siva Himself, whom he awaited. Motionless, under the tree, sat the Great God, lost in His reverie. In the middle of His forehead was a faint black line, like a wrinkle, but slightly tremulous. And Modon's heart beat faster, for he realised that this was the great Third Eye of Mahadeva, capable of flashing forth fire at any time, and he knew not when it might open. Here was the opportunity that he wanted, but even now he dared not shoot,

since there was none near by on whose behalf to awaken love. Gradually, however, the forest was returning to life from the long swoon imposed on it by Nandi, and as it did so, the very helper that Modon needed came in sight, for the most beautiful girl that he had ever seen entered the wood. Her manner and bearing were royal, and she wore the silken robe of prayer. It was Uma, the Princess of the Mountains, come to offer her morning worship to Siva.

The slender form of the young Archer was hidden amongst the trees as she passed on to the feet of the Great God. Absorbed in His presence, she knelt before Him, and He opened His eyes and smiled upon His worshipper.

At this moment the audacious Modon drew his bow and made ready to take aim. Scarcely a second was it, yet the thought entered the mind of Mahadeva that the lips of this maiden were very red, and then, ere the idea was fully formed, a mighty wave of horror swept over him, the great Third Eye had opened and sought the source of the vain impulse, and where the too venturesome God had been on the point of sending forth his dart, lay now, only a handful of ashes, in the form of a man.

A second later the luminous figure of Siva had faded out from beneath the cedar, and Uma knelt alone to make her offerings.

But the grove was filled with the voice of lamentation. Desire, the beautiful wife of Love, was not to be consoled, that one flash of anger had not destroyed her with Modon. And she called on Spring, as her husband's friend, to build the funeral-fire in which she might die and follow him. At this moment, however, the voice of Indra rang through the wood. "Sweet lady!" it pleaded, "do nothing rash! It is true that you are separated from your husband for a while. But in a few months the work he began here will be completed, and when Mahadeva weds Uma, He will of His free grace restore the life of Modon also. Only wait patiently." And Spring prevailed upon Roti to rely on the promise of Indra and wait.

[True enough, certain months afterwards, the spirit of her husband was given back to her. But his body had been destroyed. So, since then, walks Love invisible amongst men and gods.]

And Uma, left alone in the forest, realised that all her beauty had failed to prevail upon her Husband to forget her as Sati for one moment. Now, therefore, she must make a stronger appeal, and of a strangely different kind.

Then she left her princely home and went away to a hermitage, far from the dwellings of men, to live. A rough grass girdle and the covering of birch-bark became all her clothing. She slept on



the bare earth, in the little time when she was not telling the name of Siva on her beads, and her right arm grew marked and worn with the constant pressure of her rosary. Her hair was matted, and for food she seemed to take no thought.

How long this course of life had lasted, she herself knew not, when one day a Brahmin beggar passed that way, and stopped at her door to beg for food.

Uma, always pitiful as a mother to the needs of others, though she appeared to have none of her own, hastened to give him alms. But when he had received her dole, the beggar seemed desirous of lingering awhile to chat.

"Lady, for whose sake can you be practising such a course of penance?" he asked. "You are young and fair. Methinks this is the life of one old or disappointed that you lead. Whose love draws you to live thus?"

"My heart," she replied, "is all for Siva."

"Siva!" said the beggar, "but surely He is a queer fellow! Why, He seems to be poorer than poverty, and a dreamer of dreams. I trust indeed, Lady, that your heart is not given to that Madman!"

"Ah," said Uma, sighing gently, "you speak thus because you do not understand! The actions of the great are often unaccountable to the common mind. The ways of Mahadeva may well be beyond your ken!"



"But," he persisted, "believe that I speak wisdom! Spend your life no longer in a vain effort to reach One who is not worthy of your love. Give up the thought of Siva. Even if He be what you say, He does not deserve——"

"Stop!" said Uma, "I have let you speak too long. I cannot listen to one word more," and she turned to go.

She was just lifting her foot, had not yet quite turned her eyes away, when a strange change began to steal over the Brahmin's features, and the Princess Uma, watching it, stood rooted to the spot. She held her breath. Surely there must be some mistake. Indeed, she could not believe her eyes. But at last she had to believe. For fasts and vigils had done what beauty alone could never have accomplished. The Brahmin who stood before her was none other than—Mahadeva Himself.

## Savitri, the Indian Alcestis

THERE are few of the Greek stories that we love so much as that of Alcestis. Every one remembers how Admetus, her husband, was under a curse, and unless one could be found to die for him, he must, on a certain day, give up his life and betake himself to the dark realms of Pluto. And no one can forget that there was one to whom death seemed a little thing to suffer, if only thereby Admetus might be saved. This was his wife, Alcestis. So she, the brave woman-heart, left the light of the sun behind her, and journeyed alone to the under-world and the kingdoms of the dead.

Then was there sorrow and mourning in the halls of Admetus, until evening, when, as we all know, there came thither a guest whose strength was beyond that of mortals, and whose heart was open to the sadness of all. And he, the mighty Herakles, taking pity on the sorrow of Admetus, went down into Hades, and brought forth the soul of the faithful wife. Thus was the curse removed, and Death himself vanquished by men. And Alcestis dwelt once more with her husband Admetus, and after many years, as ripe corn into

the garner, so passed they away, and were both together gathered to their fathers.

In this story we learn a great deal of the thought of the Greeks about women. We learn that they knew that woman, though usually so much weaker than man, and needing his protection, could yet, in the strength of her love for another, become brave as a lion, and face dangers gladly from which a man might shrink in terror.

In India also, amongst her gentle white-veiled women, with all their silent grace, there is the same courage, the same strength. There also it is known that a timid girl—a very daughter of men, not like Sati or Uma, some divine personage veiled in flesh—though utterly unaccustomed to the touch of the rough world, will become suddenly brave to protect another. The Indian people know that there is no darkness that a true wife will not enter at her husband's side, no hardship she will not undertake, no battle that on his behalf she will not fight. And yet their story of the ideal woman is curiously different from this of Alcestis. Different, and at the same time similar. Only listen, and you shall judge for yourselves.

Beautiful and gifted was the royal maiden, Savitri. And yet, at the mention of her name, the world thought only of her holiness. She had come to her parents as the Spirit of Prayer itself. For the marriage of her father Aswapati and his

queen had for many years been blessed with no children, which thing was a great sorrow to them. And they were now growing old. But still, daily, the King lighted with his own hands the sacrificial fire, and chanted the national prayer *Savitri*, and begged of the gods that even yet he might have a child. It was in the midst of his worship one day, as he sang *Savitri*, and brooded deep on the divine will, that suddenly in the midst of the fire, he saw the form of a woman, that very goddess who was guardian spirit of the Indian prayer, and she blessed him and told him that his wife and he would yet have a daughter, whose destiny was high and whose name was to be that of the prayer itself. Thus, out of the devotion of two royal lives, was born the Princess *Savitri*.

Oh how good she was, and at the same time how strong! Full of gentleness and pity, there was yet nothing wavering or foolish about her. True to every promise, faithful to all who were in need, fearless and decided when difficult questions came up, she was a comfort to her parents and to all their people.

At last her father began to feel that it was time to think of her marriage. She was now seventeen or eighteen, and as yet no proposal had been made for her hand. Nor had her parents any idea to what prince to send the cocoanut on her behalf, as hint that a princess waited for his wooing. At



this point, however, Savitri herself made a suggestion. Before making any attempt to arrange the marriage, let her go on a long pilgrimage ; pray at one holy shrine after another ; take the blessings and listen to the words of many holy men ; enter deep into communion with her own Guardian Spirit ; and on her return, if no direction had been vouchsafed her, it would still be time enough to deal with the question of her marriage. For these things are guarded by destiny, and it is not well to meddle hastily with high matters. Every one thought this idea admirable. To some of her father's councillors it may have seemed that in this way Savitri would receive an education fit for a great queen. She would see the country and do homage to its holy and learned men. Others may have thought of the advantages in health and beauty. But to her parents it seemed that even as she had come to them, so also she would enter her husband's home, out of the very heart of prayer.

So great preparations were made. Grey-headed old courtiers were told off to watch over the Princess, and numbers of servants were sent to attend on her. She was to drive in a carriage, gilded all over, and surrounded by curtains of scarlet silk, through which she could see everything without being seen. And a long train of men and elephants were to follow, bearing tents

and furniture and food, as well as a palanquin for Savitri to use, instead of the car, when she should be travelling in the forest. They started early one night when the moon was new, that they might cross the hot dry plain in the dark hours, and reach the forests before day. The Princess had never gone so far before. She had wandered about the royal gardens all her life, and she had driven about the city and parks in a closed carriage. But this was quite different. She was setting off on an adventure, alone, free. She felt that she was being led somewhere. Every step was the fulfilment of a delightful duty. It was her first long separation from her father and mother. Yet she was happy, and the tossing trees and howling jackals and midnight sky filled her with joy, even at moments when the torch-bearers, at the head of the train, were startled at the roar of a tiger in the jungle. On such a journey the starlit night becomes like a great mother-heart, and one enters it, to listen to a silence deeper than any voice.

The march had lasted till long after daybreak, when they reached the edge of a forest beside a stream, where Savitri could bathe and worship, and cook her own simple meal. They stayed there the rest of that day, and resumed their pilgrimage early next morning.

This life continued for many months. Some-

times they would encamp for a whole week within reach of a certain hermitage. And Savitri would enter her palanquin every morning and have herself carried before the hut of the holy man, to offer gifts and request his blessing. Then she would sit on the ground before him, closely veiled, ready to listen if he chose to speak, but if not, content only to watch, since blessed are the eyes that look upon a saint.

And all the time she was drawing nearer and nearer to the great day of her life, that was to make her name dear to womanhood throughout the ages.

Journeying one day in the forest she saw, through the curtains of her litter, a tall, strong young man. There was something about him that made her hold her breath. Across one shoulder he carried an axe, and in his other hand he held a bundle of faggots. He was evidently a forester. Yet his bearing spoke of courage and gentleness, and the courtesy with which he helped some one of her train, and then stood aside for them to pass, told of high breeding and great gentlehood of heart. Inquiries were made as to the name and parentage of this young man. And then the Princess and her train turned homewards. For Savitri knew that to-day her destiny was come upon her. Here stood that soul to whom through endless births she had been united.

He might be a forester or he might be a king. In any case she, with her mind's eye cleansed by pilgrimage and prayer, had recognised him to whom in all her past lives she had been wife, and she knew that what had been should again be. Here was he whom she should wed.

Aswapati was in his hall of state, when at last his daughter entered his presence. Savitri would have liked to see her father alone, but beside him sat the holy man Narada, clad in his pink cloth, and the King bade her speak freely before him. "Has my child determined where she will bestow herself?" he asked gently, when the first warm greetings were over.

Savitri flushed crimson as she replied.

"Tell me all about this youth," said Aswapati the King eagerly.

"In a certain woodland, my father," said the Princess timidly, "we met a young man who is living the life of a forester. His father is a blind king who has been driven from his throne in his old age, and is living in the forests in great poverty. This youth have I determined to marry. He is gentle, and strong, and courteous, and his name is Satyavan."

As soon as Savitri had begun to describe her choice, Narada had looked startled and interested. But now he held up one hand suddenly, saying, "Oh no ! not he !"



Aswapati looked at him anxiously. "Why not?" he said. "My daughter has wealth enough for two."

"Oh, it is not that!" said Narada; "but if Savitri weds this youth she will certainly become a widow, for Satyavan is under a curse, and twelve months from this day he is doomed to die!"

The Princess had grown very pale. For every Hindu woman prays to die before her husband. But when Aswapati turned and said to her, "This is sad news, my daughter! you must choose again," she said, "No, my father. One gives one's faith but once. I cannot name a second as my husband. It is sad to be a widow, but having taken Satyavan, I must face whatever comes to me with this husband of my choice."

Both the King and Narada felt that these words were true, and messengers were sent next day, bearing a cocoanut from Aswapati to the young prince dwelling in the forest. This meant that the King desired the youth to marry his daughter, and Satyavan and his parents gladly accepted, with the one stipulation that Savitri should come and live in their home, instead of taking her husband away from them in their old age.

So the wedding was proclaimed. The fire was called to witness their union. The iron ring was bound on Savitri's left wrist, and Satyavan and

she had the veil and cloak knotted together, and hand in hand walked seven times around the sacred fire, while the priest at each circle chanted the ancient prayers of their people that that stage of life might be blessed to them both. Then they went away into the forest to live, and Savitri put away all the robes and jewels of a princess, and set herself to be a faithful and loving daughter to her new parents. Only she could never forget the terrible doom that had been pronounced upon her husband, and she never ceased to bear in mind the secret date on which Narada had said that he would die. For Yama, the God of Death, is the only being in all the worlds, perhaps, who never breaks his word, and "as true as Death" has become such a saying in India, that Yama is held to be also the God of Truth and Faith.

This was the thought that made poor Savitri's heart beat fast. She knew that there was no hope of the curse being forgotten. She could see quite plainly, too, that no one but herself knew anything about it. It remained to be seen whether she could find a way to save her husband or not.

The dreadful moment drew nearer and nearer. At last, when only three days remained, the young wife took the terrible vow that is known as the *three vigils*. For three nights she would remain awake, in prayer, and during the intervening days she would eat no food. In this way Savitri hoped

to reach a state of the soul where she could see and hear things that commonly pass unknown to mortals.

The blind King and his aged Queen implored their new daughter to relax this effort, but when she made the simple answer, "I have taken a vow," they could say no more. In that case her resolution was sacred, and they could only help her to carry it out. At last the fourth morning dawned, but still Savitri would not touch food. "No," she said, "it will be time enough at night-fall. Now I ask, as the only favour I have yet begged, that you should allow me also to go out into the jungle with your son, and spend the day." She was careful not to mention Satyavan's name to his parents, for that would have been forward and ill-bred. The old couple smiled gently. "The girl is a good girl," they said to one another, "and has yet asked for nothing. We certainly ought to allow her to go. Satyavan, take thou good care of our daughter." At these words Savitri touched their feet, and went out with her husband.

She had calculated that the blow would fall at midday, and as the hour drew near she suggested that they should stop in a shady spot and wander no further. Satyavan gathered grass and made a seat for her. Then he filled her lap with wild fruit; and turned to his work of hewing wood.

Poor Savitri sat and waited, listening breathless

for the strokes of his axe upon the trees. Presently they rang fainter and feebler, and at last Satyavan came tottering up to her, with the words, "Oh, how my head pains!" Then he lay down with his head on her lap, and passed into a heavy swoon.

At this moment the wife became aware of a grim and terrible figure advancing towards them from the jungle. It was a stately personage, black as night, and carrying in one hand a piece of rope, with a noose at the end. She knew him at once for Yama, God of Truth and King of the Dead.

He smiled kindly at Savitri. "My errand is not for you, child!" he said to her, stooping at the same time and fixing his loop of rope around the soul of Satyavan, that he might thus drag him bound behind him.

Savitri trembled all over as he did this, but when the soul of her husband stood up to follow, then she trembled no longer. She also stood up, with her eyes shining and her hands clasped, prepared to go with Satyavan even into the realms of Death.

"Farewell, child," said Yama, turning to go, and looking over his shoulder; "grieve not overmuch! Death is the only certain guest."

And away he went, down the forest-glades. But as he went, he could distinctly hear behind him the patter of feet. He grew uneasy. It was his duty to take the soul of Satyavan, but not that



of Savitri. What was she doing now? Could she be following him? Why, in any case, had she been able to see him? What power had sharpened her hearing and cleared her sight? To most mortals, Death was invisible. Patter! patter! Yes, that certainly was a footfall behind him. Foolish girl! Was she striving to follow her husband? She must go home sooner or later. Still he would try to soothe her grief by gifts. "Savitri," said Yama, suddenly turning round on her, "ask anything you like, except the life of your husband, and it shall be yours. Then go home."

Savitri bent low. "Grant his sight once more to my father-in-law!" she said.

"Easily granted!" said the Monarch of Death. "Now, good-bye! This is not the place for you."

But still the footsteps followed Yama. The forest grew denser and more gloomy, yet wherever he could go, Savitri seemed to be able to follow.

"Another wish, child, shall be yours!" said Yama. "But you *must* go!"

Savitri stood undismayed. She was beginning to feel herself on good terms with Death, and believed that he might give way to her yet. "I ask for the return of my father-in-law's wealth and kingdom," she answered now.

"It is yours," said Yama, turning his back. "But go!"

Still the faithful wife followed her husband, and Yama himself could not shake her off. Boon after boon was granted her, and each time she added something to the joy of the home in which she had not yet passed a year. At last Death himself began to notice this.

"This time, Savitri," he commanded, "ask something for yourself. Anything but your husband's life shall be yours. But it is my last gift! When that is given, you are banished from my presence."

"Grant me, then, that I may have many sons, and see their children happy before I die!" said Savitri.

Yama was delighted. So Savitri was willing to flee from him, he thought! "Of course! Of course! A very good wish!" he said.

But Savitri was standing still before him, as if waiting. "Well," he said, "have I not granted it? That is all."

At these words Savitri raised her head and smiled. "My Lord," she said, "a widow does not remarry!"

The dread King looked at her for a moment. As God of Death, how could he give up the dead? But as God of Truth, could he urge Savitri to be untrue? A moment he hesitated. Then he stooped and undid the noose, while the whole forest rang with his laughter.

"Peerless amongst women," he said, "is that brave heart that follows the husband even into the grave, and recovers his life from Yama himself. Thus do the gods love to win defeat at the hands of mortals."

An hour later, under the same tree where he had swooned, Prince Satyavan awoke, with his head on Savitri's knee. "I have had a strange dream," he murmured feebly, "and I thought that I was dead."

"My beloved," answered Savitri, "it was no dream. But the night falls. Let us hasten homewards."

As they turned to go, the jungle rang with the cries of a royal escort, who had come out to seek them. For that very day, Satyavan's father had received word of the restoration of his kingdom, and the life of hardship and poverty was behind them all forever.

## Nala and Damayanti

ONCE upon a time there was a king named Nala, who ruled over a people known as the Nishadas. Now this Nala was the first of kings. In person he was strong and handsome, full of kingly honour, and gracious in his bearing. He loved archery and hunting, and all the sports of monarchs. And one special gift was his, in an extraordinary degree, the knowledge, namely, of the management of horses. Thus in beauty, in character, in fortune, and in power, there was scarcely in the whole world another king like Nala.

If there were one, it could only be Bhima, King of the Vidarbhas, a sovereign of heroic nature and great courage, deeply loved by all his subjects. Now Bhima had three sons and one daughter, the Princess Damayanti. And the fame of Damayanti, for her mingling of beauty and sweetness, and royal grace and dignity, had gone throughout the world. Never had one so lovely been seen before. She was said to shine, even in the midst of the beauty of her handmaidens, like the bright lightning amidst the dark clouds. And the hearts of the very gods were filled with



gladness whenever they looked upon this exquisite maiden.

It happened that constantly before Damayanti, the minstrels and heralds chanted the praises of Nala, and before Nala those of Damayanti, till the two began to dream of each other, with an attachment that was not born of sight. And Nala, conscious of the love that was awakening within him, began to pass much of his time in the gardens of his palace, alone. And it came to pass that one day he saw there a flock of wild swans with golden wings, and from amongst them he caught with his hands one. And the bird was much afraid, and said, "O King, slay me not! Release me, and I will go to Damayanti and so speak to her of thee, that she will desire to wed thee, and no other in the world!" Musing, and stroking the wings of the swan, Nala heard his words, and saying, "Ah, then do thou indeed even so!" opened his hands, and let him go free.

Then the swans flew up and away to the city of the Vidarbhas, and alighted in the palace gardens before Damayanti and her maidens. And all the beautiful girls scattered immediately, to run after the fleeing birds, trying each to catch one. But that after which Damayanti ran, led her away to a lonely place, and addressed her in human speech. "Peerless amongst men, O Dama-

yanti!" it said, "is Nala, King of the Nishadas. Accept thou him! Wed thou with him! Ever happy and blessed is the union of the best with the best!" The Princess stood with head bowed and folded hands, as soon as she understood what the swan would say; but when he ended, she looked up with a smile and a sigh. "Dear bird!" she said, "speak thou even thus unto him also!"

And the handmaidens of Damayanti, from this time on, began to notice that she grew abstracted. She wandered much alone. She sighed and became pale, and in the midst of merriment, her thoughts would be far away. Then, delicately and indirectly, they represented the matter to Bhima, and he, reflecting that his daughter was now grown up, realised that her marriage ought to be arranged, and sent out messages all over the country, that on a certain day her *swayamvara* would be held.

From every part, at this news, came the kings, attended by their bodyguards, and travelling in the utmost splendour, with horses and elephants and chariots. And all were received in due state by Bhima, and assigned royal quarters, pending the day of Damayanti's *swayamvara*. And even amongst the gods did the news go forth, and Indra, and Agni and Varuna, and Yama himself, the King of Death, set out from high Heaven

for the city of the Vidarbhas, each eager to win the hand of the Princess.

But as the proud gods went, they overtook a mortal wending his way on foot, and his beauty and greatness, of mind as well as body, were such that they immediately determined to leave their chariots in the skies, and tread the earth in the company of this man. Then, suddenly alighting before him—for the gods know all—they said, "Nala! thou art a man to be trusted. Wilt thou promise to carry a message for us?"

Nala, seeing four luminous beings appear before him, and hearing them ask him to be their messenger, answered immediately, "Yea! That will I!" and then, drawing nearer, he added, "But tell me first who are ye who address me? and what is the message, further, that I should carry for you?" Said Indra, "We are the Immortals, come hither for the sake of Damayanti. Indra am I. Here at my side is Agni, God of Fire. There is Varuna, Lord of Waters. And next to him stands Yama, destroyer of the bodies of men. Do thou, on our behalf, appear before Damayanti, saying, 'The Guardians of the World are coming to thy *swayamvara*. Choose thou, I pray thee, one of the gods for thy lord!'"

"But," said Nala, "I myself am come hither with the self-same object. How can a man plead with the woman whom he loves on behalf of

others? Spare me, ye Gods! Send me not upon this errand!"

"Then why, O King!" answered the gods gravely, "didst thou first promise? Why, having promised, dost thou now seek to break thy word?"

Hearing this, Nala spoke again, saying, "But even if I went, how could I hope to enter the apartments of Damayanti? Is not the palace of Bhima well guarded?"

But Indra replied, "Leave that to us! If thou wilt go, thou shalt have the power to enter!" and saying "Then, O Gods, I obey your will!" Nala found himself, on the moment, in the presence of Damayanti, within the private apartments of the palace of Bhima.

Damayanti sat amongst her ladies. The next day was to be her *swayamvara*, and feeling sure that Nala would attend it, the smiles had come back to her lips, and the colour to her cheeks. Her eyes were full of light, and the words she spoke were both witty and tender. Seeing his beloved thus for the first time, Nala felt how deep and overflowing was his love for her. Truly, her beauty was so great, that the very moon was put to shame by it. He had not thought, he had not heard, he could not even have imagined, anything so perfect. But his word was given, and given to the gods, and he controlled his own feeling.



This determination did not take even so much as that instant which it required for him to become visible to the assembled maidens. As he did so, they sprang to their feet in amazement, feeling no fear, but struck with wonder at the beauty of the spirit who appeared thus before them, and full of the question, "Who can it be?" Yet were they too shy to venture to speak to him. Only Damayanti came forward gently, and smilingly addressed the heroic vision, saying, "Who art thou? And how hast thou contrived to enter unperceived? Are not my apartments well guarded, and the King's orders severe?"

Hearing these words, the King answered, "My name, O Princess, is Nala. I have entered here undiscovered, by the power of the gods. I come as their messenger. Indra, Agni, Varuna, and Yama, all alike desire, O beauteous one! at the morrow's *swayamvara* to be chosen by thee. As their messenger, I say, 'Choose thou one of them for thy lord!'"

Damayanti bowed as she heard the names of the gods. Then, with a smile, she turned herself to Nala. "Nay, O Hero!" she answered, "it is not the gods, but thee thyself whom I shall choose. Thy message reached me, borne hither by the swans. Thee have I accepted in my heart. For thee has the *swayamvara* been

called. Failing thee, I refuse to be won by any!"

"Nay," answered Nala, "in the presence of the gods, wouldst thou choose a man? Ah, for thine own sake, turn thy heart, I pray thee, to those high-souled lords, the creators of the worlds, unto the dust of whose feet I am not equal! Misguided is the mortal who setteth them at nought. Be warned, I beg of thee. Choose thou one of these heavenly beings. What woman would not be proud, to be sought by the Protectors of Men? Truly, do I speak unto thee, as thy friend!"

Tears were by this time running down the cheeks of Damayanti. Trembling, and standing before Nala with folded hands, she answered, "I bow to the gods, but thee, O King, have I chosen for my lord!"

"Blessed one!" answered Nala gently. "Do even as thou wilt. How dare I, having given my word to another, turn the occasion to my own profit? Yet, if that had consisted with honour, I would have sought my will! Knowing this, do thou decide."

The face of Damayanti had changed as Nala spoke these words. Under the tears were now smiles. For his secret was told. A moment she stood and thought, and then she raised her head. "I see a way, O monarch," she said, "by which no blame whatever can attach itself to thee.

Come thou to the *swayamvara* with the gods. Then, in their presence, shall I choose thee. And the choice will be mine alone. Thou shalt be without sin."

Nala realised nothing, save the promise that Damayanti on the morrow would give herself to him. With throbbing pulses, but quiet manner, he bowed his head in farewell, and, immediately becoming once more invisible, returned to the presence of the gods and told them all that had happened. "The maiden said to me, 'Let the gods, O Hero, come with thee to my *swayamvara*. I shall, in their presence, choose thee. Yet shalt thou be without sin.'" And the gods accepted the report of their messenger, for he had been faithful to his trust.

The morning of the *swayamvara* dawned brightly, and the kings entered the lofty portals of the amphitheatre, even as lions might enter into the mountain wilds. The scene was all magnificence. Amongst the great pillars sat each royal guest on a shining throne. Each bore his sceptre and turban of state. Each was surrounded by his own heralds and minstrels, and amongst the blaze of silks and banners and jewels shone the flowers and foliage that decorated the hall.

At the appointed hour, preceded by her trumpeters, and surrounded by her escort, the Princess

Damayanti entered. And her loveliness was such that, to the assembled monarchs, she seemed to be surrounded with dazzling light. All drew in their breath, and remained almost without stirring, at the sight of such matchless beauty. One by one the names and achievements of each monarch were proclaimed. The heralds of the Princess would challenge, and those of each king in turn would reply, and Damayanti stood listening, ready to give the signal, when her choice should be made.

But when the name of Nala was called, and she raised her head and looked up, before stepping to his side, what was not the terror of Damayanti to find that there, seated side by side on different thrones, all equally splendid, all equally noble, were no less than five Nalas, and she had no means of distinguishing him whom she would choose?

The Princess looked and tried to choose. Then she hesitated, and stepped back. Then she tried again, but all to no purpose. She knew of course that this was a trick of the gods. Four of these five were Indra, Agni, Varuna, and Yama. One was Nala. But which one? She tried to remember the marks of the celestial beings, as they had been told to her in her childhood by old people. But none of these marks did she see on the persons before her, so exactly had they all



reproduced the form of Nala. What must she do? At this supreme moment of her life she dared not make a mistake.

Pondering deeply in her own mind, it suddenly occurred to Damayanti that she should appeal for protection to the gods themselves! Immediately, bowing down unto them in mind and speech, and folding her hands reverently, she tremblingly addressed them :—

“From that moment, O ye Gods, when I gave ear to the words of the wild swan, did I choose Nala, the King of the Nishadas, to be my lord. That I may be true to this, let the gods now reveal him to me! Inasmuch as neither in thought nor word have I ever yet wavered in that resolve, oh, that I may hereafter be true to it, let the gods now reveal him to me! And since, verily, it was the gods themselves who destined the King of the Nishadas to be my lord, let them now, that themselves may be true to themselves, reveal him to me! To Nala alone did I vow to give myself. That I may be true to this vow, let them now reveal him to me! I take refuge in the mercy of the exalted Guardians of the Worlds! Let them now resume their proper forms, that I may know my rightful lord!”

Touched by these pitiful words of Damayanti, and awed by her fixed resolve and her pure and womanly love, the gods immediately did what

they could, in that public place, to grant her prayer, by taking back, without change of form, their divine marks. And straightway she saw that they were not soiled by dust or sweat. Their garlands were unfading, their eyes unwinking. They cast no shadows. Nor did their feet touch the earth. And Nala stood revealed by his shadow and his fading garlands; the stains of dust and sweat; his standing on the ground, and his human eyes. And no sooner did Damayanti thus perceive the difference between him and the gods, than she stepped forward eagerly to fulfil her troth. Stooping shyly, she caught in her left hand the hem of Nala's garment, and then raising herself proudly, she threw round his neck a wreath of beautiful flowers. And all present, seeing her thus choose the one human Nala for her husband, broke out into sudden exclamations, and the gods themselves cried, "Well done! Well done!"

And Nala stepped down from his high place, and said, "Since thou, O blessed one, hast chosen me, a mortal, from the midst of the Immortals, know me for a spouse to whom shall thy every wish be sacred. Truly do I promise thee, that as long as life lasts I shall remain thine and thine alone!" And so with mutual vows and homage, they both sought and received the protection of the gods. Then did all guests, royal

and divine, depart; and the marriage of Nala and Damayanti was performed; and they went, in great happiness, to the city of the Nishadas.

Now as the gods were returning to their own regions, they met Koli, the King of Darkness, and Dwapara, Spirit of Twilight, coming to the earth. And when they asked where they were going, Koli replied, "To Damayanti's *swayamvara*. My heart is fixed on wedding with that damsel." Hearing this, Indra smiled, and answered, "But her *swayamvara* is already ended. In our sight she hath chosen Nala for her husband." To this said Koli, that vilest of the celestials, in great wrath, "If, spurning the Immortals, Damayanti in their presence hath wedded with a mortal, then is it meet she should suffer a heavy doom!" But the gods answered, "Nay, with our sanction was it that Damayanti chose Nala. And what damsel is there who would not have done the same? Great and manly and learned, that tiger amongst men, that mortal who resembles one of the Divine Protectors, has truthfulness and forbearance and knowledge, and purity and self-control, and perfect tranquillity of soul. Whoever, O Koli, wisheth to curse this Nala, will end in cursing and destroying himself by his own act!"

Having spoken thus solemnly, the gods turned, leaving Koli and Dwapara, and went to

heaven. But when they had gone, Koli whispered to Dwapara, "I must be revenged! I must be revenged! I shall possess Nala, and deprive him of wife and kingdom. And thou, entering into the dice, shalt help me to do this!"

Yet was it twelve long years ere Koli, watching Nala, could find in his conduct any slightest flaw by which he might be able to enter in and possess him. At last, however, there came an evening when he performed his worship without having completed all his ablutions. Then, through this error, Koli took possession of Nala. Also he appeared before his brother, Pushkara, tempting him to challenge Nala to a game of dice. And Dwapara also, at the same time, placed himself in the hands of Pushkara as the principal die. Such was the beginning of that terrible gambling that lasted month after month, and ended by depriving Nala of all that he had.

Many times, in the course of that play, came Damayanti and the citizens and subjects of Nala, and begged him to desist. But he, maddened by the indwelling Koli, turned a deaf ear to his queen, and grew only the more intent upon the dice. Till she, seeing that evil was about to come upon them, sent for the royal charioteer. "O charioteer," she said, "I seek thy protection. My mind misgiveth me. The King may come to



grief. Take thou therefore these my children, my son Indrasen and my daughter Indrasena, and carry them to my father's house. And when thou hast given them into the care of my kindred, do thou even as thou wilt." And when the royal councillors had been consulted, they found the bidding of the Queen to be good, and the children were sent to the care of Bhima.

And when the charioteer had gone, Pushkara won from Nala his kingdom and all else that was left to him. And laughing he said, "O King, what stake hast thou now? Damayanti alone remaineth. Let us play for her!" And Nala gazed at Pushkara in anguish, but spake never a word.

Then, taking off all his ornaments, and covered only with a single garment, leaving behind him all his wealth, the King set out to leave the city. But Damayanti, clothing herself also in one long scarf, followed after him through the gates. And for three days and nights they wandered together, without food and without rest. For Pushkara had made proclamation that any who gave help to Nala should be condemned to death; so that, partly for fear of the sentence, and partly lest they should bring further harm on their king himself, none of his subjects dared to offer them anything.

At last, on the fourth day, wandering in the

forest seeking for roots and fruits, Nala saw some birds of golden colour, and thinking, "Here is food!" snatched off his one piece of clothing, and threw it over them to catch them. But lo! the birds rose upwards to the sky, bearing the garment with them! And then, looking down and beholding the once mighty lord of the Nishadas standing naked in the forest, his mind full of gloom, and his gaze rooted to the earth, the birds spake mockingly, and said to him, "Oh thou of little wit, we are none other than the dice with which thou playedst. We followed thee to take away thy garment. For it pleased us not that thou shouldst take with thee even a single cloth!" Hearing these words, and realising his terrible plight, since he had, it was evident, mysterious beings for his foes, Nala turned himself to Damayanti, and said over and over again, "Yonder, my gentle one, is the road to thy father's kingdom. I have lost all, Damayanti. I am doomed and deprived of my senses. But I am thy lord. Listen to me. Yonder is the road to thy father's kingdom."

But Damayanti answered him with sobs. "O King, how could I go?" she asked him, "leaving thee in the wild woods alone, deprived of all things, and worn with hunger and toil. Nay, nay, whenever, in these ill-starred days, thy heart may turn to the thought of thy former happiness,

thou shalt find me near thee, to soothe thy weariness! Remember what the physicians say, 'In sorrow is there no physic equal to the wife'! Is it not true, O Nala, that which I say unto thee?"

"O my gentle Damayanti," answered Nala, "it is even as thou sayest. Truly there is no friend, no medicine, equal unto the wife. But I am not seeking to renounce thee. Why dost thou tremble so? I could forsake myself, beloved, but thee I could not forsake. Wherefore, my timid one, shouldst thou dread this?"

But on Damayanti lay the prevision of the wife, and she answered, "I know, O King, that thou wouldst not willingly desert me. Yet maddened and distracted, many things are possible. Why dost thou repeatedly point out to me the way to my father's home? Or if thou really desirest to place me with my kindred, then let us wend together to the country of the Vidarbhas. Thou shalt there be received with honour by the King, and, respected by all, shalt dwell happily in our home." "Surely," answered Nala, "thy father's kingdom is to me even as my own. Yet could I not by any means go there at such a crisis. Once did I appear there in fortune, bringing glory upon thee. How could I go in this misery, causing thee shame?"

Talking together in this fashion, Damayanti had contrived to share her own clothing with her

husband, and thus wandering slowly on together, they came to a shed reserved for travellers. Here they sat down on the bare earth to rest, and then, worn out with hunger and weariness and sorrow, both, unawares, fell fast asleep.

But Nala, whose mind was distraught by Koli, could not rest. As soon as Damayanti slept, he woke, and began to turn over in his mind all the disaster he had brought upon her. Reflecting on her devotion, he began to think that if only he were not with her, she would surely find her way to her father's kingdom. And out of the very honour in which he held her, it was unimaginable to him that she should be in danger on the way. Thinking thus, the question occurred to him, how could he cut their common garment without her being awakened by his act? and with this question in his mind, under the influence of Koli, he strode up and down the shed. At that very moment, he caught sight of a sword lying a step or two away, unsheathed. Seizing this, he cut the veil in half, and then, throwing the sword away, he turned and left Damayanti, in her sleep, alone.

Yet again and again, his heart failing him, did the King of the Nishadas return to the hut to look once more, and yet once more, at his sleeping wife. ("Dragged away," says the chronicler, "by Koli, but drawn back by love," it seemed as if the mind of the wretched King were rent in twain, and one



half fought against the other. "Alas! alas!" he lamented, "there sleepeth my beloved on the bare earth, like one forlorn! What will she do when she awaketh? How will she wander alone through the perils of these woods? May the Sun himself—thou blessed One!—and the Guardian Spirits, and the Stars and the Winds, be thy protectors, thy womanly honour being its own best guard!"<sup>1</sup> And addressing thus his dear wife, peerless in beauty, Nala strove to go, being reft of his reason by Koli. Till at last, stupefied and bereft of his senses, Nala forsook his sleeping wife. In sorrow departed he, maddened and distraught, leaving her alone in that solitary forest.

Three years had gone by, and once more Damayanti was dwelling,—but now with her children by her side,—in her father's house. For Bhima had sent out messengers in all directions to seek for her, and by them had she been found and brought back to her own people. But always she wore but half a veil, never would she use ornaments, and ever she waited sorrowfully for the coming again of her husband, Nala. For in all this time he had never been heard of.

Now it had happened to Nala that on finally leaving Damayanti he saw a mighty forest-fire,

<sup>1</sup> *Lit.*—Adityas, Vasus, Ashwins, and Maruts.

and from its midst he heard the voice of some creature crying, "Come to my aid, O mighty Nala!"

Saying, "Fear not!" the King stepped at once within the circle of fire, and beheld an enormous snake lying there coiled up.

And the snake spoke, saying, "I have been cursed, O King, to remain here, unable to move, till one named Nala carry me hence. And only on that spot to which he shall carry me can I be made free from this curse. And now, O Nala, if thou wilt lift me in thy hands, I shall be thy friend, and do to thee great good. Moreover, there is no snake equal unto me. I can make myself small and light in thy hands. I beseech thee to lift me and let us go hence!"

Then that great snake made himself as small as the human thumb, and taking him in his hands, Nala carried him to a place outside the fire. But as he was about to place him on the ground, the snake bit him, and Nala perceived that as he was bitten, his form had been changed.

And the snake spoke, saying, "Nala, be comforted! I have deprived thee of thy beauty, that none may recognise thee. And he who has wronged and betrayed thee shall dwell in thee from this time in uttermost torture. Henceforth art thou in peace, and that evil one in torment from my venom. But go thou now to Ayodhya, and present thyself before the king there, who is

skilled in gambling. Offer him thy services as a charioteer. Give to him thy skill with horses, in exchange for his knowledge of dice. When thou dost understand the dice, thy wife and children will be thine once more. And finally, O King, when thou desirest to regain thy proper form, think of me and wear these garments." And saying these words that lord of Nagas gave unto Nala two pieces of enchanted clothing, and immediately became invisible.

And Nala made his way to Ayodhya, and entered the service of Rituparna the King, receiving great honour as the Master of the Horse. And all the stables and their attendants were placed under him; for Rituparna desired nothing so much as that his steeds should be fleet.

But night after night the fellow officers of the charioteer—who was known in the palace of Ayodhya as Vahuka—would hear him alone, groaning and weeping, and listening they distinctly heard the words: "Alas! where layeth she now her head, a-hungred and a-thirst, helpless and worn with toil, thinking ever of him who was unworthy? Where dwelleth she now? On whose bidding doth she wait?" And once, when they begged him to tell them who it was that he thus lamented, he told them in veiled words his whole story. "A certain person," he said, "had a beautiful wife, but little sense. The wretch was false. He

kept not his promises. Fate came upon him, and they were separated. Without her, he wandered ever to and fro oppressed with woe, and now, burning with grief, he resteth not by day nor night. At last he has found a refuge, but each hour that passes only reminds him of her. When calamity had overtaken this man, his wife followed him into the wild woods. He repaid her by deserting her there! Abandoned by him, lost in the forest, fainting with hunger and thirst, ever exposed to the perils of the wilderness, her very life was put by him in danger. Yea, my friends, it was by him —by him that she was thus deserted, by him, that very man, so foolish and ill-fated, that she was left thus alone in the great and terrible forest, surrounded on every side by beasts of prey, by him, by him!"

With his mind dwelling thus on Damayanti, did Vahuka the charioteer live in the palace of Rituparna. And Damayanti, sheltered once more in her father's house, had one thought, and one only, and that was the possibility of recovering Nala. Now it was the custom amongst the Vidarbhas to send out Brahmins periodically, who, bearing the King's orders, wandered from town to town and from country to country, telling stories to the people from the holy books, and giving religious instruction wherever it was needed. It had indeed been by the aid of these strolling



teachers that Damayanti herself had been discovered, when she was acting as lady-in-waiting to a foreign princess. Now, therefore, it was decided that she should give them their directions, and try by their means to trace out her long-lost husband. They came to her therefore for instructions, and she gave them a song which they were to sing in all the assemblies that they should come to in every realm.

"Whither, beloved Gambler, whither art thou gone,  
Cutting off one half my veil,  
Abandoning me, thy devoted wife,  
Asleep in the forest ?

Ever do I await thee,  
As thou wouldst desire me,  
Wearing but half a veil,  
Enwrapt in sorrow.

Relent, O King ! O Hero !  
Relent and return thee,  
To her who weepeth incessantly  
For thy departure !"

"Crying thus, add to the part your own words," she said to the Brahmins, "that his pity be awakened. Fanned by the wind, the fire consumeth the forest !"

Again—

"Surely a wife should be protected  
And maintained by her husband.  
Strange that, noble as thou art,  
Thou neglectest both these duties !

Wise thou wast, and famous,  
High-born and full of kindness.  
Why didst thou then deal to me this blow?

Alas, the fault was mine!  
My good fortune had departed from me!  
Yet even so, thou greatest, thou noblest  
Amongst men, even so, have pity,  
Be merciful to me!"

"If, after ye have sung in this wise," said Damayanti to the Brahmins, "any should chance to speak with you, oh, bring me word of him! I must know who he is, and where he dwelleth. But take ye great heed that none may guess the words ye speak to be at my bidding, nor that ye will afterwards return to me. And do not fail, I beseech ye, to seek out all that is to be known regarding that man who shall answer to your song!"

Having received these orders, the Brahmins set out in all directions to do the bidding of Damayanti. And their quest led them far and near, through cities and villages, into strange kingdoms, amongst forests, hermitages, and monasteries, and from one camp of roving cowherds to another. And wherever they went they sang the songs and played the part that Damayanti had laid upon them, seeking in every place, if by any means they might bring back to her news of Nala.

And when a long time had passed away, one of these Brahmins returned to Damayanti, and said

to her, "O Damayanti, seeking Nala, the King of the Nishadas, I came to the city of Ayodhya, and appeared before Rituparna. But though I repeatedly sang thy songs, neither that King nor any of his courtiers answered anything. Then, when I had been dismissed by the monarch, I was accosted by one of his servants, Vahuka the charioteer. And Vahuka is of uncomely looks and figure, and possessed of very short arms. But he is skilful in the management of horses, and is also acquainted with the art of cookery.

"And this Vahuka, with many sighs and some tears, came up to me and asked about my welfare. And then he said, 'She should not be angry with one whose garment was carried off by birds, when he was trying to procure food for both! The honour of a woman is its own best guard. Let her not be an-angered, against one who is consumed with grief. Noble women are ever faithful, ever true to their own lords, and whether treated well or ill, they will forgive one who has lost all he loved!' Hearing this, O Princess, I hastened back to tell thee. Do now what seemeth best unto thyself."

Words cannot describe the joy of Damayanti as she heard this news. She knew now where Nala was, and the task with which he was entrusted. It lay only with her woman's wit to find some means of bringing him to her father's house.

Having pondered long and carefully over the matter, she went to her mother, and in her presence sent for the same confidential servant—a kind of chaplain to the royal household—who had found herself and brought her back from exile to the city of the Vidarbhas. Having her mother's full sanction, but keeping the matter secret from Bhima, Damayanti turned to this Brahmin, Sudeva, and said, "Go straight as a bird, Sudeva, to the city of Ayodhya and tell Rituparna the King that Bhima's daughter, Damayanti, will once more hold a *swayamvara*. Kings and princes from all parts are coming to it. Knowing not whether the heroic Nala lives or not, it is decided that she is again to choose a husband. To-morrow at sunrise, say thou, when thou seest him, the ceremony will take place." And Sudeva, bowing before the Queen-mother and her daughter, left the royal presence, and proceeded to Ayodhya.

When Rituparna heard the news, he sent immediately for Vahuka, the charioteer. If he desired in one day to reach the city of the Vidarbhas, there was only one driver in the world who could enable him to do so. "Exert thyself, O Vahuka!" he exclaimed. "Damayanti, daughter of Bhima, holds to-morrow a second *swayamvara*, and I desire to reach the city this very day!"

Hearing these words Nala felt as if his heart would break. "What!" he thought to himself,



"is this the madness of sorrow? Or is it perhaps a punishment for me? Ah, cruel is this deed that she would do! It may be that, urged by my own folly, the stainless Princess cares for me no longer. Yet I cannot believe that she, my wife, and the mother of my children, could possibly dream of wedding any other. In any case, however, there is but one thing to be done. By going there I shall do the will of Rituparna, and also satisfy myself." Having thus reflected, Vahuka answered the King, saying, "O monarch, I bow to thy behest. Thou shalt reach the city of the Vidarbhas in a single day."

Wonderful and eventful was the driving of Vahuka the charioteer that day. Never had Rituparna, or the servant who attended him, seen such skill. The servant indeed remembered, as he watched it, the fame of Nala. But he turned his eyes upon the driver, and seeing his want of beauty, decided that this could hardly be he, even though he should be disguised and living as a servant, in consequence of misfortune. Every now and then the chariot would rise into the sky, and course along with the fleetness of the wind. Like a bird would it cross rivers and mountains, woods and lakes. In a few seconds it would speed over as many miles. And Rituparna knew not how to express his delight in the skill of his charioteer. Words could not speak his anxiety

to reach the city of the Vidarbhas before nightfall; and more and more, as the hours went on, did he become convinced that only with the help of Vahuka was this possible. But about noon the two became involved in a dispute about the number of leaves and fruits on a certain tree. Rituparna, who was a great mathematician, said there were so many, and his officer insisted on stopping the car, cutting down the tree, and counting, to see if the King's words were true! Rituparna was in despair. He could not go on without Vahuka, and Vahuka was intent on verifying the numbers. However, the charioteer was sufficiently amazed and respectful to the King's knowledge when he had counted the fruits and found them to be correct. Then, in order to coax him onwards, Rituparna said, "Come on, Vahuka, and in exchange for thy knowledge of horses, I will give thee my knowledge of dice. For I understand every secret of the gaming-table. This was the very moment for which Nala had waited and served so long! However, he preserved his composure, and immediately the King imparted to him his knowledge. And lo! as he did so, Koli, the spirit of darkness, came forth, invisible to others, from within Nala, and he felt himself suddenly to be released from all weakness and blindness, and to have again all his old-time energy and power. And radiant with renewal of

strength, the charioteer mounted once more on the chariot, and taking the reins in his hands, drove swiftly to the city of the Vidarbhas.

As Rituparna, towards evening, entered the city, the sound of the driving of his chariot fell on the ears of Damayanti in the palace, and she remembered, with a thrill, the touch of Nala on a horse's reins. But, mounting to one of the terraces, she looked out, and could see only one who drove like Nala, but none who had his face and form. "Ah!" she sighed, "if he does not come to me to-day, to-morrow I enter the funeral fire! I can bear no longer this life of sorrow!"

The King of Ayodhya meanwhile, hastening to call on Bhima, began to think there must have been some mistake. He saw no other kings and princes with their chariots. He heard no word of any *swayamvara*. He therefore said that he had come merely to pay his respects. This, thought the King of the Vidarbhas, was a little strange. A man would not usually come so far and in such hot haste, in a single day, merely for a passing visit of courtesy. However, feeling sure that the reason would reveal itself later, he proceeded to offer Rituparna the attentions due to his rank and importance.

Nala, however, had no eyes for anything about him. Buried in thought, he gave orders for the disposal of the horses, and having seen them duly

carried out, sat down with arms folded and head bent. At the sound of a woman's voice he looked up. A maid sent from within the palace was asking him, in the name of Damayanti, why and for what purpose had he and Rituparna come. "We came," answered the charioteer bitterly, "because the King heard that the Princess of the Vidarbhas would for a second time hold a *swayamvara*!" "And who art thou?" again asked the maiden. "Who art thou? And who yon servant yonder? Might either of ye by chance have heard aught of Nala? It may even be that thou knowest whither King Nala is gone!"

"Nay, nay!" answered Vahuka. "That King in his calamity wanders about the world, disguised, and despoiled even of his beauty. Nala's self only knoweth Nala, and she also that is his second self. Nala never discovereth his secret to any!"

"And yet," replied the maid, "we sent a Brahmin to Ayodhya, and when he sang—

'Ah, beloved Gambler, whither art thou gone,  
Taking with thee half my veil,  
And leaving me, who loved thee,  
Sleeping in the woods?  
Speak thou, great King, the words I long to hear,  
For I who am without stain pant to hear them!'

When he sang thus, thou didst make some reply. Repeat thy words now, I beseech thee. My mistress longeth again to hear those words!"



At this Nala answered in a voice half choked—  
“She ought not to be angry with one whose garment was carried off by birds, when he was trying to procure food for both! The honour of a woman is its own best guard. Let her not be angered against one who is consumed with grief. Noble women are ever faithful, ever true to their own lords, and, whether treated well or ill, they will forgive one who is deprived of every joy!” As he ended, the King could no longer restrain himself, but burying his head in his arms, gave way to his sorrow; and the girl, seeing this, stole away silently to tell all to the Princess.

News was brought also to Damayanti of the greatness and power of Rituparna's charioteer. It was told her how on coming to a low doorway he would not stoop down, but the passage itself would grow higher in his presence, that he might easily enter it. Vessels at his will filled themselves with water. He needed not to strike to obtain fire, for on holding a handful of grass in the sun, it would of its own accord burst into flame in his hand. Hearing these and other things, Damayanti became sure that the charioteer Vahuka was no other than Nala, her husband. Yet, that she might put him to one more test, she sent her maid, with her two children, to wander near him. On seeing them, Nala took them into his arms and embraced them, with tears. Then,

realising how strange this must seem, he turned to the waiting-woman and said apologetically—"They are so like my own! But do not thou, maiden, come this way again. We are strangers here from a far land. We are unknown, and I would fain be alone."

And now, having heard this, Damayanti could wait no longer, but sent for the permission of her father and mother, and had Nala brought to her own apartments. Coming thus into her presence, and seeing her clad just as he had left her, wearing only half her veil, the seeming charioteer was shaken with grief. And Damayanti, feeling sure that he was Nala, and seeing him as a servant, whose wont it was to be a king, could scarcely restrain her tears. But she composed herself, and said quietly, "Well, Vahuka, did you ever hear of a good man who went away and left a devoted wife, sleeping alone, in the forest? Ah, what was the fault that Nala found in me, that he should so have left me, helpless and alone? Did I not choose him once in preference to the very gods themselves? And did he not, in their presence, and in that of the fire, take me by the hand, and say, 'Verily, I shall be ever thine'? Where was that promise, do you think, when he left me thus?"

And Nala answered, "In truth, it was not my fault. It was the act of Koli, who hath now

left me, and for that only, have I come hither ! But, Damayanti, was there ever a true woman who, like thee, could choose a second husband ? At this moment have the messengers of thy father gone out over the whole world, crying, ' Bhima's daughter will choose again a husband who shall be worthy of her.' For this it is that Rituparna is come hither ! "

Then Damayanti, trembling and affrighted, folded her hands before Nala, and said, " O dear and blessed lord, suspect me not of evil ! This was but my scheme to bring thee hither. Excepting thee, there was none in the whole world who could drive here quickly enough. Let the gods before whom I chose thee, let the sun and the moon and the air, tell thee truly that every thought of mine has been for thee ! " And at the words, flowers fell from the sky, and a voice said, " Verily Damayanti is full of faith and honour ! Damayanti is without stain ! "

Then was the heart of Nala at peace within him. And he remembered his change of form, and drawing forth the enchanted garments, he put them on, keeping his mind fixed on the great Naga. And when Damayanti saw Nala again in his own form, she made salutation to him as her husband, and began to weep. Then were their children brought to them, and the Queen-mother gave her blessing, and hour after

hour passed in recounting the sorrows of their separation.

The next day were Nala and Damayanti received together in royal audience by Bhima. And in due time, Koli being now gone out from him, Nala made his way to his own kingdom of the Nishadas and recovered his throne, and then, returning for his queen, Damayanti, and their children, he took them all back to their own home, and they lived there happily together ever after.



# EASIER ENGLISH UNSEENS

BY

A. C. MUKERJI, M.A., I.E.S.,

*Professor of English Literature, Muir Central College, and  
Fellow of the University of Allahabad*

FIFTH EDITION

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

CALCUTTA, BOMBAY, MADRAS, LONDON

1924

## PREFACE

THE present series of Unseens are adapted to the needs and capacities of pupils in the High Section at school and students of the first and second year classes in college. The passages are not arranged in any order, so that the teacher may select what passage he likes for each day's exercise. Many of these passages are stories likely to prove both interesting and instructive to boys and youths. The grammatical exercises form a special feature of the questions appended to each passage, and it is particularly requested that these should in each case be carefully done in class, as without a thorough grounding in Grammar it is exceedingly hard for a young student to grasp the intricacies of the English language or to speak and write that language correctly.

MUIR COLLEGE, ALLAHABAD

*March 9, 1921.*

A. C. M.

Few perhaps realise how much the happiness of life and the *formation of character* depend on a wise selection of books we read. Our ancestors had great difficulty in procuring\* books : ours\* now is what to select\*. We must be careful what\* we read, for there are *books and books*, and there are books which, as\* Lamb said, are not books at all. Others are *more than useless*,\* and *poison the mind* with suggestions of evil.

## EXERCISES.

1. Frame a suitable heading to this passage.
2. Give a summary of the whole passage in one short sentence.
3. "Our ancestors had great difficulty in procuring books." Why?
4. Explain the phrases in italics.
5. What is the difference between 'few' and 'a few'?
6. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
7. Analyse the sentence "We must be careful what we read...all."

*It is one thing to own\* a library ; it is quite\* another to use it wisely.* I have often been astonished how little care people devote to the selection of what they read. Books, we know, are almost innumerable ; our hours for reading\* are, alas ! very few. And yet many people read *almost by hazard*. They will take any book they chance to find\* in a room at a friend's house ; they will buy a novel at a railway-stall *if it has an attractive title* ; indeed, I believe in some cases even the *binding\** affects their choice.

## EXERCISES.

1. What exactly is the author talking of in this passage?
2. Do you find any difference between the purport of this passage and that of the preceding?

3. Give examples of what the author calls "reading by hazard."
  4. Explain the phrases in italics.
  5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
  6. Analyse the last sentence.
- 

## 3

It is not true that the ordinary duties of life—agriculture, manufactures, and commerce—the pursuits\* to which *the vast majority\** are and must be devoted—are *incompatible with the dignity or nobility of life*. Whether a life is noble or ignoble depends, not on the calling\* which is adopted, but on *the spirit in which it is followed*. The humblest life may be noble, while that\* of the most powerful monarch or the greatest genius may be contemptible. Commerce, indeed, is not only compatible, but I would almost *go further* and say that it will be most successful, if carried on *in happy union with noble aims* and generous aspirations.

## EXERCISES.

1. Give a brief summary of the above passage.
  2. What does true nobility of life depend on ?
  3. Explain the phrases in italics.
  4. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
  5. Analyse (1) the sentence 'Whether a life is noble...followed' ; and ( 2 ) the last sentence.
- 

## 4

It is the idle who complain they cannot find time to do\* that which they fancy they wish. In truth, people can generally make time for what they choose to do\*; *it is not really the time but the will that\* is wanting\**; and the



advantage of leisure is mainly that we may have the power of choosing\* our own work, not certainly that\* it *confers any privilege of idleness*. Time is often said to fly\* ; but *it is not so much the time that flies as\* we that waste it*, and wasted time is worse than no time\* at all.

## EXERCISES.

1. Give the purport of the above passage in one short sentence.
2. Explain fully the parts in italics.
3. "Time is often said to fly". Quote any sayings to this effect that may be known to you.
4. In what sense is it true that "wasted time is worse than no time at all" ?
5. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
6. Analyse both the first and the second sentence.

## 5

Among the travellers and adventurers of past days there was a story of a wonderful city somewhere\* in South America where everything was of gold, a city\* full of *riches beyond the dreams of men*. It was often talked of, and was known by its Spanish name of El Dorado, the Golden. Sir Walter Raleigh believed that *he had a good idea where the city lay*, and he sailed across the Atlantic to the mouth of the great river, Orinoco, which *pours out its waters* on the northern shore of South America. Leaving\* his ships at the mouth of the river he *went far\* up\* it* in a small boat. He treated the Indians who lived on the banks kindly\*, and they guided him and helped him all\* they could. But he found no Golden City. Nor was it ever found. It remained *a dream and a fancy*, but to this day *its name is with us*. If

we wish to picture a place of wonderful riches we say it is an El Dorado.

### EXERCISES.

1. What achievement of Sir Walter Raleigh is described in the above extract ?
2. Who was Raleigh ? When did he flourish ?
3. What is the present meaning of the term El Dorado ? Give the origin of this meaning in your own words.
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the sentence beginning "Sir Walter Raleigh believed that he had a good idea.....".

### 6

There is one famous Englishman to whom it is not easy to give\* a separate name—the British private soldier\*. Yet without him where would be the name and fame of the great generals whose victories *adorn the pages of history* ? On the march he is patient, hardy, and enduring\* ; in battle he is full of *steady and resolute valour*. Wherever his officers lead him he will follow ; if he should lose his officers, he is quite capable of leading\* himself, and will fight for his own land *with the best will in the world*, as\* unwilling to *yield\** an *inch* as\* is the bull-dog to loose\* his grip.

### EXERCISES.

1. What qualities of the British soldier have been enumerated in the above passage ?
2. What is the answer to the question contained in the second sentence ?
3. Can you give any instance from history in which you find these qualities of the British soldier demonstrated ?
4. Explain the parts in italics fully.

5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the last sentence.

## 7

We build our houses of brick, stone and wood, but in the *frozen regions of the far north*, houses are often made of ice and snow. The Eskimo cuts the snow into blocks like large bricks and places them one\* on another, just\* as we build houses. *To make\* the blocks hold\* together*, half-melted snow is used, as\* we use lime. When it freezes it *binds the parts together in one mass*. For a window, the people use a piece of clear ice, which they fix in the roof. Instead of a fire they burn oil lamps. The floor is covered with the skins of animals. The doorway is very small, and a skin is hung over it to keep\* out the cold wind.

## EXERCISES.

1. In what respects does the house of the Eskimo differ from our own?
2. Explain the parts in italics.
3. Parse the words marked by an asterisk.
4. What is the force of *for* in the sentence beginning "For a window".

## 8

When Sir James Thornhill was painting pictures on the inside\* of the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, he had a very narrow escape from\* being dashed to pieces on the floor. He was thinking so much about his work *that he quite forgot where he was*, and wishing\* to see\* the effect of his painting\*, he stepped back to the very edge of the platform on which he was working. *Another step backwards\* would have*

*cost him his life*, for nothing could have saved him from falling\* on the pavement hundreds of feet below\*. His servant, seeing his great danger, seized a brush and daubed some fresh paint on the picture. The artist sprang forward *to save\* his work*, and found that in so\* doing\* he had saved his life.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Rewrite the above story as briefly as you can.
2. With what motive did the servant daub some fresh paint on the picture?
3. Explain the parts in italics.
4. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
5. Analyse the second sentence beginning "He was thinking so much....."

---

#### 9

One day\* a boy was looking after some sheep in a field not far from a railway cutting. Suddenly he heard a loud rumbling\* noise. Running\* to the cutting\*, he saw that a *landslip* had taken place, and that *the line was blocked* with earth and stones. He could tell by the signals that a train was coming that way\*, so he thought of a plan to prevent\* an accident in which many persons might be killed. Taking off his red flannel shirt, he ran along the line to meet\* the coming\* train. The driver saw him waving\* the red garment above his head. Regarding this\* as\* a *signal of danger*, he stopped the engine, and no harm happened to the train.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Frame a suitable heading to this story.
2. What quality in the character of the boy does the story illustrate?



3. What would have happened if the boy had done nothing to stop the train ?
4. Explain the phrases in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the sentence, "He could tell by the signals..... killed."

---

 IO

A milkman in Spain fell ill and was not able to go\* *his usual rounds*\*. This was a very serious matter. His customers could not do without the milk, and *it would be lost to him* if it was not delivered while it was fresh and sweet. Having no one to send\* with his donkey, he put the bottles into the large bags that hung at the animal's sides, and *sent off his faithful helper* alone. The donkey at once trotted away to the town. Stopping at the houses where her master daily delivered milk, she pulled the door\* bells, and then waited until the people had *helped themselves* and returned the empty bottles. She did not *miss a single customer*, and when all the bottles were emptied she set off home\* again. The milkman saw her coming along the road, and when she arrived he found that the milk was all\* gone, and that there was not a single bottle either broken or missing.

## EXERCISES.

1. Give a suitable heading to the above story.
  2. Rewrite the story in your own words as briefly as possible.
  3. What quality in the donkey does the above story illustrate ? Is the donkey credited with this quality popularly ?
  4. Explain the phrases in italics.
  5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
  6. Analyse the last sentence.
-

## II

I am sometimes disposed to think\* that there are few things in which *we of this generation* enjoy greater advantages over our ancestors than in the *increased facilities of travel*. The very\* word 'travel' is suggestive. It is a form of 'travail', which means 'excessive labour'; and, as\* Skeat observes, it *forcibly recalls the toil of travel in olden days*. How different things are now ! It is sometimes said that every one should travel on foot ; we are told that in these days of railroads *people rush through countries and see nothing*. It may be so\*, but that\* is not the fault of the railways. They confer upon us the inestimable advantage of being able, so rapidly and with so little fatigue, to visit\* countries which were *much less accessible to our ancestors*.

## EXERCISES.

1. What is the subject talked about in the above passage ?
2. Write a summary of the above passage in one or two short sentences.
3. How is the word 'travel' derived ? What does this derivation suggest ?
4. Can you name a few other things in which we enjoy advantages over our ancestors ?
5. Explain the parts in italics.
6. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
7. Analyse the first sentence.

---

 12

Alexander may be taken as\* almost a *type of ambition* in its usual form, though *carried to an extreme\**. His desire was to conquer, not to inherit or to rule\*. When news was brought that his father Philip had taken some town, or won

some battle, instead of being delighted, he used to say\* to his companions, "My father will go on conquering\*, *till there be nothing extraordinary left for you and me to do\**." He is said even to have been *mortified at the number of the stars*, considering\* that he had not been able to conquer one world. Such ambition is *justly foredoomed to disappointment*.

## EXERCISES.

1. Who was Alexander ? What do you know of him ?
2. What is 'ambition' ? What kind of ambition was that of Alexander ?
3. Explain the parts in italics.
4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
5. What kind of infinitive is "to have been mortified", and what does it denote ? Frame one or two other sentences to illustrate the same.
6. Rewrite in Indirect Speech the sentence beginning "My father will go on conquering, &c."
7. Analyse the sentence, "When news was brought, &c"

## 13

It is quite true that *we can attach too much importance* to outward forms of politeness, and that bad manners do not always imply the *absence of kindly feeling*. But no one can deny that it is much more pleasant to meet\* with people who are civil than with those who are not ; and if good manners be *no more than a means of making\* the world a pleasanter place to live\* in\**, they would still be well\* worth learning\* and practising. Some people excuse their ill-manners on the ground that the study and practice of politeness would weaken our candour, our love of truth, our *hatred of sham*—qualities\* that are supposed to be very valuable. Do not be misled by such nonsense. We might as well give up polishing\*

our tables and brightening our gold chains, for fear of weakening the wood and the metal.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Give a summary of the above passage as briefly as you can.
2. What exactly is meant by "*outward* forms of politeness"? And with what are they contrasted?
3. In what way do some people try to defend bad manners?
4. Explain in detail the comparison suggested in the last sentence.
5. Explain the parts in italics.
6. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
7. Analyse the second sentence.

---

#### 14

Some years ago a gentleman was staying at an hotel in a small English village. The evening was fine and warm, and after dinner he thought it would be pleasant to go\* and sit on the bridge that crossed the small river, and there enjoy\* a cigar. The bridge was undergoing repairs, and the workmen had not yet left off. When he had seated himself on the most comfortable stone he could find, *you may understand it was not cheering\** to discover\* he had no matches in his pocket. After a careful search, the gentleman was about to return\* to the hotel, when one of the workmen came up to him, and holding out two wooden matches, said in a very fierce tone, "Gents like you should buy your own matches". Now *the action itself* was kind and thoughtful; *in other words*, it was courteous. But do you think the words were polite?

#### EXERCISES.

1. Rewrite the above story in your own words.
2. Give a suitable heading to the above story.
3. What kind of word is "Gents"?



4. What is the answer to the question in the last sentence? How would you *make* the words polite?
5. Explain the parts in italics.
6. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
7. Analyse the sentence, "When he had seated himself.....pocket."

## 15

We may roughly divide the *story of mankind* into two great divisions or periods; first, the period when there were no historians and no history. and, secondly, the period when historians existed who could write the history of their times. Of course we know much more about those periods in which the historians, who could read and write, lived, than we do of *the legendary periods when writing\* was unknown*. Yet, when we make this division between the legendary and historic periods, we must remember that some nations advanced in civilisation far more rapidly than others\*.

## EXERCISES.

1. Into what two periods may we divide the story of mankind? How are these two periods distinguished?
2. Give one word for 'who could read and write.'
3. "Some nations advanced in civilisation far more rapidly than others." Can you give examples?
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
6. Analyse the last two sentences separately.

## 16

A well-dressed man, who evidently *possessed more money than manners*, entered a railway compartment. An old gentleman who was within\* had placed his hat on the seat beside\* him *to reserve\* it for a friend*. The new-comer not

only took the seat, but sat on the hat and crushed it. Instead of apologising\*, he *turned fiercely on* the old gentleman, and blamed him for his carelessness in putting\* the hat there. The old gentleman smiled and said nothing. At the next station the rude passenger got out. The old gentleman then rose and called a porter. "Please run after that gentleman," said he, "and tell him that he has left something behind." The man came rushing back, and putting\* his head in\* at the door, said, "What have I left?" "*Two very bad impressions\**," coolly replied the old gentleman.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Frame a suitable heading to this story.
2. Rewrite it in your own words.
3. What were the two "bad impressions" that the man had left behind?
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
6. Rewrite the last three sentences of the story in Indirect Speech.

---

#### 17

An ancient battle was really a very short affair. No doubt\* a good deal of time was consumed in marshalling\* the troops and *bringing them into action*; there was a good deal of *preliminary skirmishing* on the part of the cavalry; and the battle was usually *prefaced by archery practice* by the light troops on both sides; but when the infantry actually engaged, *the business must have been decided in a very few minutes*. The fact is that when one or two bodies of men meet with sword or spear, a *prolonged contest* is from the nature of the case impossible. Once two bodies actually close on each other, *hand\* to hand*, whether infantry or

cavalry, the affair is over ; one side *gives way*, and then *we*\*  
*betide the one which does.*

### EXERCISES.

1. What features of ancient warfare have been described in the above passage ?
2. Summarise the above passage in one short sentence.
3. Explain the parts in italics.
4. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
5. Analyse the sentence, "The fact is that when one or two ...impossible."

---

### 18

There are certain serious dangers to which miners are exposed. The first is from an *explosion* caused by the foul air of the mine being ignited\* by the miner's lamp. As the mine is in total darkness, the men are obliged to keep\* lighted lamps, or they would lose their way and *perhaps never come out of the mine again*. An explosion is followed by an escape of bad air called choke-damp, which sometimes suffocates those men who have escaped from the explosion itself. The other danger is from drowning. The earth, as you know, has large *deposits of water under the surface*. They sometimes burst into the mine, *where some new block of coal has been excavated*. Since miners are frequently coming upon fresh springs of water, great care is needed to pump\* out the water as\* rapidly as\* possible, and every pit is provided with steam-pumps for this purpose.

### EXERCISES.

1. What kind of mines is the author speaking of ?
2. Name the two dangers to which miners are exposed. What precautions are taken to guard against the effects of these dangers ?
3. What is "choke-damp" ?

4. Explain the words and phrases in italics.
  5. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
  6. Analyse the last sentence.
- 

## 19

So far is a thorough love and enjoyment of travel from *interfering\** with the love of home, that perhaps no one can thoroughly enjoy his home who does not sometimes wander away. They are like exertion and rest, *each\* the complement of the other*; so that, though it may seem *paradoxical*, one of the greatest pleasures of travel is the return; and no one who has not *roamed abroad\**, can realise *the devotion which the wanderer feels for his home*.

## EXERCISES.

1. Express the general meaning of the above passage in one short sentence.
  2. Point out the paradox in the statement, "One of the greatest pleasures of travel is the return."
  3. Explain the parts in italics.
  4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
  5. Analyse the second or last sentence.
- 

## 20

The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as\* that every child should be given the wish to learn\*. *What does it matter if the pupil knows a little more or a little less?* A boy who leaves school *knowing much, but hating his lessons*, will soon have forgotten almost all he ever learned; while another who had acquired *a thirst for knowledge*, even if he had learned little, would soon teach himself more than the first ever knew. Children are by nature



*eager for information.* They are always putting questions. This ought to be\* encouraged. In fact, we may, to a great extent, *trust to their instincts*, and in that case they will do much to educate\* themselves.

## EXERCISES.

1. What two things are contrasted in the above passage? Point out this contrast clearly.
2. What, according to the author, is the most important thing in education?
3. In what way should we trust to the instincts of a child in the matter of education?
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the sentence, "A boy who leaves school.....knew."

## 21

From the moment we are born we cannot live alone; we stand in continual need of the assistance of all\* around us, for body and soul and spirit; we need clothes, which other men make; houses, which other men must build; food\*, which other men must produce; we have to get\* our livelihood by working\* for others while others, get their livelihood in return by working for us. As\* children, we need our parents to be\* our comforters, to take care of us in body and mind. As\* we grow up we need the care of others; we cannot exist a day\* without our fellow-men; we require teachers to educate us; books and masters to teach us our trade; and when we have learned it and settled ourselves in life, we require laws made by other men, perhaps by men who died hundreds of years before\* we were born, to secure\* to us our rights and property, to secure to us comforts in our station; and we need friends to comfort us in sorrow and in joy.

## EXERCISES.

1. Express the central idea of the passage in one short sentence.
2. Frame a suitable heading to this passage of not more than four words.
3. "Working for others"—"working for us": what different kinds of work are suggested in the two cases?
4. In what matters does man need the help of others—(1) in childhood, (2) in boyhood, (3) in youth, (4) in manhood?
5. Distinguish between 'continual' and 'continuous'.
6. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
7. Analyse the last sentence.

## 22

One day\* Sir William Napier was taking a long walk *in the country* when he met a little girl, sobbing and crying over a broken bowl. The child had been taking her father's dinner to the field where he was working, and on her return she had dropped the bowl and broken it. She feared that she would be beaten when she returned home\*. As\* Sir William was listening to the child's story, in a moment *a gleam of hope seemed to cheer her*. She looked up into Sir William's face and said *in her simple way*, "But you can mend it, can't you?" He kindly explained to the child that mending\* of the broken bowl was quite\* beyond his power, but he could help her to get\* another.

## EXERCISES.

1. Rewrite the story in your own words.
2. Give a suitable heading to the story.
3. Explain the phrases in italics.
4. Justify the use of the past perfect tense in the sentence, 'The child *had been* taking her father's dinner to the field.'
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the sentence, "She feared that she would...home".

7. Rewrite the last two sentences converting the direct into the indirect and the indirect into direct speech.

## 23

The duty of every boy and every girl at the beginning of life is, as far as possible, to choose\* suitable work. It is not, of course, always possible for a boy or girl, or man or woman, to get\* exactly the work which suits them best.\* In that case it is their duty to take\* what they can. No really worthy man or woman will stand idle because they cannot find the work they think suits\* them best. It is when they have a chance to do\* either what is suitable to them, or what is unsuitable, that they should be careful. It is at such\* times that foolish people begin to consider : "Shall I find this work lighter, or more genteel, or more easy to shirk\*?" Instead, wise people ask, "Shall I make the best of myself at this work, or will that work suit me best?" Those who ask this and decide accordingly will be those who will be doing their duty to themselves and their country.

## EXERCISES.

1. What is the lesson that the author is trying to teach in this passage?
2. Is doing unsuitable work better than standing idle?
3. On what grounds do wise people and fools make their choice between two occupations?
4. What time should we be most careful in the choice of an occupation?
5. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
6. Analyse the sentence, 'It is when they have a chance...careful.'

## 24

"Birbal," said the king one day, "how many crows are

there in the city of Delhi ?" *What a question to ask\* ! But Birbal never cried "Hold !"*

"At the present moment, O King," answered Birbal, "there are in this city exactly 99999 crows—count them, *if you doubt my word.* But if you find there are fewer, remember some may have gone to visit\* their friends round\* about Delhi, and if you find there are more\*, remember their *friends and relations from the suburbs* may have come to see\* them."

### EXERCISES.

1. Who do you think is the king referred to in the story ?
2. Show that Birbal's reply was a most clever one.
3. Explain the parts in italics.
4. Rewrite the story in your own words.
5. Suggest some appropriate title for this story.
6. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
7. Analyse the last sentence.

### 25

*A plucky and high-spirited* horse reaches its true value only when it has been brought under thorough control ; the engine of an express train is capable of doing wonderful work so long as\* the driver has it in control ; a body of brave and well-equipped soldiers, if\* *under firm and able control*, marches forward to probable victory ; and boys who are gradually acquiring self-control are *on the high road to* honour and success, and may confidently be expected to become good men and good citizens. Control of your tempers, your wishes, your words is not only necessary if you are to grow up\* courteous men, but it is very necessary if you should ever be *placed over other people.* An old Latin writer tells us that he is most powerful *who has himself in power* ; or, as the great



Duke of Wellington once said, "*Learn to obey if you wish to command.*"

#### EXERCISES.

1. What is the subject discussed in the above passage ?
2. What "wonderful work" is the engine of an express train capable of doing ?
3. "Control of your tempers, your wishes, your words." Distinguish each of these carefully with examples.
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
6. Analyse the last sentence.

---

#### 26

A workman was once asked by his master what he did with his wages. "Half\* I spend, a fourth I lend, and with a fourth I pay old debts," was\* the reply. His master was puzzled, and asked him to explain. "Well," was the answer, "half I spend on the *bare necessities of life* ; with a fourth I pay for the education of my children, and teach them a good trade, so that when I am old they may repay me, and help\* me when I can no longer work ; the fourth part, with which I pay old debts, I give to my old parents, who did so much\* for me, and *to whom I owe everything.*"

#### EXERCISES.

1. Give a suitable title to the above story.
2. What is the lesson which the story is intended to teach ?
3. Explain the parts in italics.
4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
5. Analyse the last sentence beginning "Well," was the answer...".
6. Rewrite the whole story changing the direct to indirect and the indirect to direct speech.

The old adage, "*Cleanliness is next to godliness*," has much more truth in it than you may imagine, and you will *appreciate the truth more and more* as\* you grow older. Those of you who know anything about *physiology* will not require to be told\* that a great deal of the *waste matter in our bodies* escapes by means of the skin, which contains many millions of tiny drain-pipes called 'pores'. If we neglect the frequent washing\* of our bodies these pores get choked up, and the waste matters cannot escape. "Remember," once said a great physician to his pupils, that "*dirt, darkness and disease all\* commence with the same letter.*"

## EXERCISES.

1. Frame a suitable heading for this passage.
2. What are "pores" and what function do they perform?
3. Explain the parts in italics.
4. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
5. Analyse the sentence beginning, "Those of you who know anything..."

A French general was once conducting his army through a very difficult pass in a range of high mountains. He exhorted his soldiers to bear\* patiently the fatigues of the march. "*It is easy for you to talk\**" muttered one of the soldiers near him to his companions; "you are mounted on a fine horse, but we poor wretches\* have to tramp on foot." The general overheard the remark, and *insisted on the discontented soldier taking\** his place, but scarcely had he mounted when a shot from the mountain-side struck and killed him. "You see", said the general, calling to his troops, that

"the highest place is not the least dangerous." After this he remounted his horse and continued the march.

### EXERCISES.

1. Rewrite the above story in your own words.
2. Give a suitable heading to the story.
3. Quote the sentence that in your opinion contains the moral of the story.
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the sentence beginning "The general overheard the remark,..."
7. Convert the direct speech into indirect, and *vice versa*.
8. Amend the grammar of the following :—"insisted on the discontented soldier taking his place." Give reasons for your correction.

### 29

We must be as careful to keep\* friends as\* to make\* them. And when you have made a friend, keep him. Remember that thorns and brushwood obstruct the road which no one treads. Remember also that friendship does not confer any privilege to make\* ourselves disagreeable. Some people never seem to appreciate their friends till they have lost them. *Death, however, has no power to sever\* true friendship.* If we choose our friends *for what they are, not for what they have,* and if we deserve so great a blessing, then they will be always with us, *preserved in absence, and even after death, in the amber of memory.*

### EXERCISES.

1. Give the general sense of the above passage in your own words.
2. What two cautions does the author give with regard to friendship?
3. Frame a suitable heading for this passage.

4. Explain the parts in italics.
  5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
  6. Analyse the last sentence.
- 

## 30

Descending\*, I went wandering\* *whither chance might lead, in a still ecstasy of freedom and enjoyment*, and I got—I know not how—I *got into the heart of city life*. I saw and felt London at last; I got into the Strand; I went up Cornhill; I *mixed with the life passing along*; I dared the *perils of crossings*. To do\* this, and to do it utterly alone, gave me perhaps an irrational but a real pleasure. Since\* those days I have seen the West End, the parks, the fine squares; but I love the city far better. The city *seems so much more\* in earnest*; its business, its rush, its roar, are such serious things, sights, and sounds. The city is getting its living\*—the West End but\* enjoying its pleasure. At the West End you may be amused; but in the city you are deeply excited.

## EXERCISES.

1. What is the author describing in this passage?
  2. On what grounds does he prefer the city to the West End?
  3. Explain the parts in italics carefully.
  4. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
  5. Analyse the first sentence.
- 

## 31

A gentleman stood in a shop *the other day*, when a boy came in and applied for a situation. "Can you write a good hand?" was asked. "Yes." "*Good at figures?*" "Yes." "*That will do*, I do not want you," said the shopkeeper. "But," said the gentleman, when the boy had gone, "I happen



to know that boy to be\* an honest and industrious lad. Why did you not *give him a chance*?" "Because he has not learned to say 'Yes, sir,' and 'No, sir.' If he answers me as\* he did when applying\* for a situation, how will he answer my customers after\* being here a month\*?"

## EXERCISES.

1. Give an appropriate heading to the above story.
2. What lesson is it intended to teach?
3. Explain the phrases in italics.
4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
5. Rewrite the whole story, using the indirect form of narration throughout.

## 32

Stevenson was educated at private schools, and afterwards at the University of Edinburgh. His father originally intended to make\* him an engineer, but though Stevenson had a great respect for engineering\*, he had no love for it, and he was reserved for other and perhaps more lasting\* work. "All\* through my boyhood and youth," he writes, "I was known and *pointed out for the pattern of an idler*, and yet I was always busy *on my own private end*, which was to learn\* to write\*. I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read\* and one to write in\*. As\* I walked, my mind was busy *fitting\* what I saw with appropriate words*." Thus he early began the long and somewhat tedious *apprenticeship which ultimately made him a master of his craft*.

## EXERCISES.

1. How did Stevenson qualify himself for his literary career?
2. "Though Stevenson had a great *respect* for engineering, he had no *love* for it." Distinguish carefully between *respect* and *love*.

3. "He was reserved for other and perhaps more lasting work." What was this other work? Why is it called "more lasting"?
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the sentence beginning "All through my boyhood and youth.....".

---

 33

A gentleman once advertised for a boy to assist\* him in his office; and nearly fifty\* applied for the place. After a short time he chose one out of the whole number, and sent all the rest away. "I should like to know," said a friend, "on what ground you chose that boy. He had not a single recommendation with him." "You are mistaken," answered the gentleman, "he had a great many. He wiped his feet when he came in, and closed the door after him, showing\* that he was orderly and tidy. He gave up his seat instantly to that lame old man, showing that he was courteous. He lifted up the book which I had purposely laid on the floor, and placed it on the table; while all the rest stepped over it or shoved it aside. When I talked with him I noticed that his clothes were carefully brushed, his hair in nice order, and his teeth\* as white as\* milk. When he wrote his name I observed that his finger-nails were clean. And he waited quietly for his turn, instead of pushing\* the others aside. Don't you call these letters of recommendation? I do: and *what I can tell about a boy using\* my eyes for ten minutes is worth\* all the fine letters he can bring\* me.*"

## EXERCISES.

1. What qualities did the gentleman consider to be more valuable than letters of recommendation?

2. Explain fully the sentence italicised.
3. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
4. Analyse the sentence, 'When I talked with him.....  
milk.'
5. Change the direct speech into indirect.

## 34

In the olden times there were men called alchemists, who spent the greater part of their lives in the study of science. Had they lived in modern days, some of them would have been famous chemists, for they had *brains* and perseverance, and the *capacity for taking\* infinite pains*. None of them quite succeeded in their labours, for they devoted their lives to what we knew to be a *hopeless task*: the reward of some of them for all their study, and work, and patience was to be the discovery of the *elixir of life*, which would *enable people to defy\* age and death*; the reward of others was to be the discovery of a method of changing\* *the baser metals* into gold.

## EXERCISES.

1. Who were the ancient alchemists?
2. What were the two objects for which they carried on their labours?
3. Explain the phrases in italics.
4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
5. Analyse the last sentence.

## 35

Perhaps the thing that I—and, in fact, all men who have *got on in the world*—feel to be one of the greatest things to bear\* in mind is—'Whatever you do, do it as well as you possibly\* can.' *It is the old proverb over again*, 'What is

worth\* doing\* at all is worth doing well.' Always aim to do\* your present occupation *to the very best of your ability*. It is a *first-rate thing* for a boy, when he has done anything, to feel\*— 'Well, that\* is the best thing I have ever done.' It may not be\*, very often is not, and very soon he will get dissatisfied with it and try to better it.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Give a summary of the above passage in one sentence.
2. What, according to the above writer, is the most important thing for a boy to learn ?
3. Explain the meaning of the proverb quoted by him, as clearly as you can.
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
6. Analyse the first sentence.

---

#### 36

Some men derive great pleasure from the animal kingdom, in hunting, shooting, and fishing, thus obtaining fresh air and exercise, and being led into much varied and beautiful scenery. Still it will probably *ere long* be recognised that even *from a purely selfish point of view*, killing\* animals is not the way to get\* the greatest enjoyment from them. How much more interesting would every walk in the country be, if man would but\* treat other animals with kindness, so\* that they might approach us without fear, and we might have the constant pleasure of *watching\* their winning ways*. Their origin and history, structure and habits, senses and intelligence, *offer an endless field of interest and wonder*.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Express the central idea of the above passage in one sentence.
2. Give a suitable heading to the above passage.



3. Does the author condemn hunting, shooting, and fishing ?
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the last sentence but one.

## 37

Some young men shirk work, or anything that requires effort or labour. *Few people can entertain the idea that they are of no use in the world* ; or that they are ruining themselves by their laziness. Yet the lazy person who does no work loses the power of enjoyment. *His life is all holiday*, and he has no interval of leisure for relaxation. The *lie-abeds* have never *done anything in the world*. Events sweep past\* and leave them slumbering and helpless. What\* is often called indolence is in fact the unconscious consciousness of incapacity.

## EXERCISES.

1. Give the general meaning of the above passage in your own words.
2. How does the author define 'indolence' ? Explain his meaning as clearly as you can.
3. Explain the parts in italics.
4. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.

## 38

I cannot understand how it\* is that some persons—I fear I must say some young men—are silly enough to imagine\* that any *tenderness of the heart is unmanly*, and a thing to be ashamed of\*. I have met with those who prided themselves on being "*all head and no heart*," as though a cold unfeeling nature *had some affinity with intellectual vigour*. Quite a

mistake\*. If you have not a heart, my friend\*, you are not a complete man. Never be ashamed of having strong domestic affections. Never be ashamed of *betraying emotion*, when you hear a tale of woe, or of shedding a tear over another's sorrow. It is the bravest and manliest of young men that are the most easily *touched by some kind allusion to their paternal home*, and that speak most fondly of a precious mother or a little sister.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Give the purport of the above passage in a single short sentence.
2. What is the mistake which the author points out in the above passage ?
3. What advice does he give to young men in the above passage ?
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the first sentence.

A certain king once fell ill, and the doctors declared that only a sudden fright would restore him to health ; but *the king was not a man for any one to play\* tricks on*, except his fool. One day, when the fool was with him in his boat, he cleverly pushed the king into the water. *Help had been previously provided*, and the king was drawn ashore\* and put to bed. The fright, the bath, and the bed cured the invalid ; but he was so enraged with the fool that he exiled him. The fool returned, however, and the king ordered him to be beheaded. Saying privately that he would *only repay fright with fright*, he directed the executioner not to use\* the axe, but to let fall\* a single drop of water on the culprit's neck. The fool

was led to the scaffold, and all *the usual gloomy preparations were made*. The executioner dropped a drop of water on the fool's neck. Then, amid shouts and laughter, the jester was bidden to rise\* and thank the king for his clemency. But the fool never moved : he was dead—killed by his master's jest.

#### EXERCISES.

1. What title would you give to the above story ?
2. What lesson do you learn from it ?
3. Explain the parts in italics
4. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.

#### 40

#### Lord Lawrence

A special lesson may be learned from him, that\* of endurance ; for he was, in the midst of energetic life, often troubled and sometimes even afflicted by sickness. In early life he seemed to have been *born with powerful robustness*, but as\* a young man he suffered several times from critical illness, and in middle age, ailments, affecting chiefly\* the head, *grew upon him like gathering clouds*. *If anything could add to the estimation in which he is held*, it\* is the remembrance that when he *magnificently swayed the Punjab*, his health was *fitfully uncertain*, that it was still worse when he *stemmed the tide of the Mutiny*, that it had never been really restored even when he became Viceroy, and that during the performance of deeds, always arduous and often heroic, he had to struggle with physical pain and depression as well as *wrestle with public emergencies*.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Show how the life of Lord Lawrence teaches us the lesson of endurance.

2. "Deeds always *arduous* and often *heroic*." Carefully distinguish between these two kinds of deeds.
3. Explain the phrases in italics.
4. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
5. Analyse the last sentence.

---

 41

When Napoleon Bonaparte had *left his schooldays long behind him*, and had become first Consul of France, he one day visited his old school at Brienne, and this is what he said to the boys : "Boys, remember that *every hour wasted at school means a chance of misfortune in after\* life*." What he meant was that there are certain opportunities for *building up\* character* which only come to us in our boyhood and youth, and never afterwards.\* At home and at school we spend about a *quarter of our lives*, and there we first learn the lessons of self-control, truthfulness, kindness, industry, duty, and all the other qualities that make a good man. The longer we live the\* more we realise how much\* we owe to our parents and teachers.

## EXERCISES.

1. Give a summary of the above passage as briefly as you can.
2. Explain fully the parts in italics.
3. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
4. Analyse the first sentence up to the end of the quotation marks.

---

 42

The Bengali bears existence with *a composure that neither accident nor chance can ruffle*. He becomes silently rich or uncomplainingly poor. The emotional part of his nature is



in strict subjection ; *his resentment is enduring\**, but *unspoken* ; his gratitude is of the sort that *silently descends from generation to generation*. The *passion for privacy* reaches its climax in the domestic relations. An outer apartment in even\* the humblest household is set apart for strangers and the transaction of business, but *everything behind it is a mystery*. The most intimate friend does not venture to make *those commonplace kindly inquiries* about a neighbour's wife or daughter which European courtesy demands from mere acquaintances. This *family privacy is maintained at any price*. During the famine of 1866, it was found impossible to render\* public charity available to the female members of the respectable classes ; and many a rural household starved slowly to death without uttering\* a complaint or making a sign.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Enumerate in a series of short phrases the chief points of the Bengali character referred to in the above passage.
2. What is the Hindustani word for what is here called "family privacy" ?
3. What evil consequence of this family privacy was noticed during the famine of 1866 ?
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.

When we do a thing for the first time, we have to think about it ; but the\* oftener we do it the easier it becomes, till at last it is a habit, and is done *without any effort of the will*. When we first learn to write, we have to think about the shape of each letter, but in time the muscles of the arm and hand form the letters involuntarily. Then, *in their turns*, we

learn spelling, grammar, and the rules of composition ; and the more we write the less we have to think about these things—they become a habit. Habits were intended for our good ; and it is well to bear in mind that it is just\* as easy to form\* a good habit as a bad one\*, and just as difficult *to break one off*. Be\* assured that if you are *considerate towards others* on every possible occasion, it will become as much *a part of your nature* as your tone of voice and your style of walking.\*

#### EXERCISES.

1. Give a summary of the above passage as briefly as you can.
2. Frame a suitable heading for this passage.
3. Explain the phrases in italics.
4. Give one word for "without any effort of the will."
5. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
6. Analyse the first and the last sentences of the passage.

---

#### 44

We all\* make mistakes, and when those mistakes result in injustice or cause pain to others, it is our plain duty not only to express\* regret, but to *make amends* for the wrongs we have done. When we fail to do this *we forfeit our claim to the title of gentleman*, however high\* in life we may be placed. A gentleman should never be ashamed to own\* that he is in the wrong. *It is but\* saying\* 'I am wiser to-day than yesterday.'* A gentleman is *every inch a man*—large-bodied, large-brained, and large-hearted, *whom to know\* is to love*, and to trust *without stint and without limit*.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Enumerate in your own words the distinguishing marks of a gentleman as given in the above passage.

2. Explain fully the parts in italics.
3. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
4. Analyse the first sentence.

## 45

Man may be defined as the only\* animal that can strike a light—the solitary creature\* that knows how to kindle\* a fire. This is a very *fragmentary definition* of the "*paragon of animals*", but it is enough to make\* him the *conqueror of all the rest*.\* The most degraded savage has discovered how to rub two sticks together so\* as\* to produce\* fire ; and civilised man, as much as his savage brother, is a *fire-worshipper in his practical doings*. The great conquering peoples of the world have been those who knew best how to deal with fire. The most wealthy of the active nations are those which dwell in *countries richly provided with fuel*. No inventions have changed the entire world more than steam and gunpowder.

## EXERCISES.

1. Give the purport of the above passage in one sentence.
2. What is the central idea of the passage ? Express this in a short phrase that might serve for an appropriate heading to this passage.
3. "No inventions have changed the entire world more than steam and gunpowder." How ?
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the sentence beginning "The most degraded savage.....".

## 46

Nearly all our misery and crime result from one misapprehension. The law of nature is, that a certain quantity of work is necessary to produce\* a certain quantity of good,

of any kind whatever\*. If you want knowledge, you must toil for it ; if food\*, you must toil for it ; and if pleasure, you must toil for it. But *men do not acknowledge this law*, or strive to evade it, hoping\* to get their knowledge, and food, and pleasure *for nothing* ; and in this effort they either fail of getting\* them, and remain ignorant and miserable, or they obtain them by making\* other men work\* for their benefit ; and then they are tyrants and robbers. I am not one who in the least *doubts or disputes the progress of this century* in many things useful to mankind ; but it seems to me *a very dark sign respecting\* us that we look with so much indifference upon dishonesty and cruelty in the pursuit of wealth.*

## EXERCISES.

1. What is the author talking of in this passage ?
2. Give the purport of the passage as briefly as you can.
3. What law of nature governs all our activities ? And how do some people try to evade this law ?
4. What evil feature of modern civilisation does the author condemn in the last sentence ?
5. Explain clearly the parts in italics.
6. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
7. Analyse the last sentence.

Like the sands of the sea the stars of heaven have ever been used as\* an *appropriate symbol of number*, and we know that there are more than one hundred million ; many\*, no doubt, with planets of their own\*. *But this is by no means all.* Nor is it only the number of the heavenly bodies which is so overwhelming ; their magnitude and distances are almost more impressive. The ocean is so deep and broad as\* to be\*



almost infinite, and indeed *in so far as our imagination is the limit*, so\* it may be. Yet what is the ocean compared to the sky? Our globe is little compared to the *giant orbs* of Jupiter and Saturn, which again *sink into insignificance by the side of the Sun*. The Sun itself is as\* nothing compared with the dimensions of the solar system. The solar system itself travels in one region of space, sailing between worlds and worlds, and is surrounded by many other systems at least as great and complex; while we know that *even then we have not reached the limits of the Universe itself*.

## EXERCISES.

1. Give a suitable heading to the above passage.
2. What is the general idea running through the whole passage?
3. What is the "solar system?"
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the sentence, "The ocean is so deep and broad.....be."

## 48

There is a time for all things—a time\* to work\* and a time to play. We shall work all\* the better for reasonable change, and *one reward of work is to secure leisure*. It is a good saying\* that *where there's a will there's a way*; but while it is all very well to wish\*, *wishes must not take the place of work*. In whatever sphere his duty lies, every man must rely mainly\* on himself. Others can help us, but *we must first help ourselves*. *It is hardly an exaggeration to say* that honest work *is never thrown away*. Nor can any work, however persevering\*, or any success, however great, *exhaust the prizes of life*.

## EXERCISES.

1. Give the purport of the above passage in the form of a short heading or title.
  2. "We shall work all the better for reasonable change." What does "change" mean here ?
  3. How does the author compare wishes with work ?
  4. Explain as clearly as you can the sentences in italics.
  5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
  6. Analyse the sentence, "It is a good saying.....work."
- 

## 49

Good descriptions and pictures help us to see\* much more than we should perhaps perceive for ourselves. It may even be doubted whether some persons do not *derive a more correct impression* from a good drawing\* or description, which *brings out the salient points*, than they could from actual, but *unaided, observation*. The idea may gain in accuracy, in character, and even in detail, more than it misses in vividness. But, *however this may be*, for those who cannot travel, descriptions and pictures have an immense interest ; while to those who have travelled, they will afford an *inexhaustible delight* in reviving\* the memories of beautiful scenes and interesting expeditions.

## EXERCISES.

1. Show how good descriptions and pictures are useful to those who have not travelled as well as to those who have.
  2. Compare the advantages of actual observation with those of a good description or picture.
  3. Distinguish 'accuracy,' 'character,' and 'detail.'
  4. Explain the parts in italics.
  5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
  6. Analyse the second sentence.
-

There was a certain nobleman who kept a fool to whom he one day gave a staff, and ordered him to keep it till he should meet with one who was a greater fool than himself. Not many years after\*, the nobleman fell sick, and was on the point of death. The fool came to see\* him. His lord said to him, "I must shortly\* leave you." "And whither are you going?" said the fool. "Into another world", replied his lordship. "And when will you come again? Within a month?" "No". "Within a year?" "No". "When then?" "Never". "Never!" said the fool, "and what provision hast thou made for thy entertainment there?" "None at all". "No!" said the fool, "none at all! Here, then, take my staff, for with all my folly, I am not guilty of any such folly as\* this."

## EXERCISES.

1. Frame a suitable heading or title for the above story.
2. What is the moral of the above story?
3. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
4. Justify the use of "should" in the first sentence.
5. Analyse the first sentence.
6. Change the dialogue between the nobleman and the fool into the indirect form of narration.

November set in burning\* hot\*, and by the tenth the grass was as dry as stubble; still we hoped for a thunder-storm and a few days' rain, but none came. December *wore wearily on*, and by Christmas the smaller creeks, except those which were snow-fed, were reduced to a few muddy pools, and vast quantities of cattle were *congregated within easy reach of the*

*river.* Of course, *feed began to get very scarce*, yet\* we were *hardly so badly off* yet\* as our neighbours, for we had just parted with *every beast we could spare*, and were only waiting for the first rain to start\* after store cattle, which were somewhat hard to get\* near the new colony. No rain yet, and we were in the end of January ; *the fountains of heaven were dried up.*

## EXERCISES.

1. What is the author describing in the above passage ?
2. What can you infer regarding the occupation of the man who is speaking in the above passage ?
3. Explain the parts in italics.
4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
5. Analyse the sentence beginning, "Of course feed began to get scarce".
6. What is the force of the preposition 'by' in the two phrases "by the tenth", and "by Christmas" in the first and second sentences of the above passage ?

## 52

The soldiers, having searched this side\* of the valley *after a fashion*, had now *laid by much of their vigilance*, and stood dozing\* at their posts or only *kept a look out* along the banks of the river ; so that in this way we drew steadily away from their neighbourhood. But the business was the most wearing I had ever taken part in. A man *had need of a hundred eyes in every part of him*, to keep\* concealed in that uneven country and *within cry of* so many scattered sentries. When we must pass an open place, quickness was not all, but a swift judgment not only of *the lie of the whole country*, but of the solidity of every stone on which we must set foot ; for the afternoon was now fallen so breathless that the rolling\*



of a pebble sounded abroad like a pistol shot, and would start the echo calling among the hills and cliffs.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Give a summary of the above passage as briefly as you can.
  2. Enumerate the difficulties encountered by the author in trying to keep concealed in that uneven country.
  3. Explain the parts in italics.
  4. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
  5. Analyse the last sentence.
- 

#### 53

Dr. Johnson, it is said, never forgot anything that he had seen, heard, or read. Burke, Clarendon, Gibbon, Locke, Tillotson, were all distinguished for strength of memory. When alluding\* to this subject, Sir William Hamilton observes :—For *intellectual power of the highest order*, none were distinguished above Grotius and Pascal, and Grotius and Pascal forgot nothing they had ever read or thought. Leibnitz and Euler were *not less celebrated for their intelligence than for their memory*, and both could repeat the whole of the *Æneid*. Ben Jonson tells us that he could repeat all that he had ever written, and whole books\* that he had read. Themistokles could call by their names the twenty thousand citizens of Athens. Cyrus is reported to have known\* the name of every soldier in the army. Hortensius (*after Cicero*, the greatest orator\* of Rome), after sitting\* a whole day\* at a public sale, correctly reported from memory all the things sold, their prices, and the names of their purchasers. Niebuhr, the historian, was not less distinguished for his memory than for his acuteness. In his youth he was employed in one of

the public offices of Denmark. Part\* of a book of accounts having been destroyed, he *restored it by an effort of memory.*

### EXERCISES.

1. Give a suitable heading to the above passage.
  2. Who were Dr Johnson, Burke, Clarendon, Gibbon, Locke, Tillotson, Ben Jonson, Themistokles, Cyrus, and Niebuhr?
  3. Which of the memory feats described above appeals to you as the most wonderful? And why?
  4. Can you from your own reading or hearing, tell any other stories of wonderful memory power?
  5. Explain the parts in italics.
  6. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
- 

### 54

The sun was just\* *hovering over the verge of the western horizon*, as\* I took my solitary walk to inhale\* the refreshing breezes. Never did I witness a finer evening, or behold *Nature arrayed in a more lovely dress*. At one extremity of the landscape, the eastern hills, whose summits and slopes were covered with towers and scattered villages, *presented their bold outlines*, brilliantly gilded by the *farewell beams* of the setting sun; in another direction, the majestic Thames *appeared like a sheet of polished silver*, with its numerous vessels under sail. The neighbouring fields *exhibited every variety of beauty and plentitude*; here rich pastures sprinkled with cattle, and there waving corn ripe for the reapers' sickle.

### EXERCISES.

1. What is the author describing in this passage?
2. Name the various features of the scene depicted in the above passage.

3. To what places do the words 'here' and 'there' in the last sentence refer ?
  4. Explain the parts in italics.
  5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
- 

## 55

The eye was intended by its Maker to be educated\*, and to be educated slowly ; but *if educated fully its powers are almost boundless*. It is assuredly then a thing to be profoundly regretted that not one man in a thousand develops the *hidden capacities of his organ of vision*, either as regards *its utilitarian or its æsthetic applications*. The great majority of mankind do not and cannot see one fraction of what they were intended to see\*. The proverb that "*None are so blind as\* those who will not see*" is as true of physical as\* of moral vision. By neglect and carelessness we have made ourselves unable to discern\* hundreds of things\* which are before us to be seen\*. Carlyle has summed this up in one *pregnant* sentence—"The eye sees what it brings the power to see\*."

## EXERCISES

1. Give the general meaning of the above passage in your own words.
  2. What are the two applications of the organ of vision that we ought to develop ?
  3. Explain fully the parts in italics.
  4. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
  5. Analyse the sentence beginning "The proverb that none are so blind" &c.
- 

## 56

If philosophy is to be believed, our world is *but\* an outlying corner of creation* ; bearing\* perhaps as small a proportion to

the great universe as a single grain bears to all the sands of the sea-shore, or one small quivering leaf to the foliage of a boundless forest. Yet even within this earth's narrow limits how vast the work of Providence ! How soon is *the mind lost in contemplating\** it ! How great that Being whose hand *paints every flower*, and shapes every leaf ; who forms every bud on every tree, and every infant in the darkness of the womb ; who feeds each crawling worm with a parent's care and watches like a mother over the insect that sleeps away the night in the bosom of a flower ; who *throws open the golden gates of day*, and draws around a sleeping world the dusky curtains of the night ; who *determines alike\* the fall of a sparrow and the fate of a kingdom* ; and so\* overrules the *tide of human fortunes* that whatever befall him, come\* joy or sorrow, the believer says "It is the Lord ; let Him do what seemeth Him good."

## EXERCISES.

1. Give a suitable heading to the above passage.
2. Write out the general meaning of the passage as clearly as you can.
3. Explain the comparisons in (1) "watches like a mother over the insect...flower", and (2) "draws around a sleeping world.....night".
4. Explain fully the phrases in italics.
5. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
6. Give a clause analysis of the last sentence—"How great that Being.....Him good".

Among the manifold misfortunes that may befall humanity, the loss of health is one of the severest. All the joys that life can give *cannot outweigh the suffering\* of the sick*. Give\*



the sick man everything, and leave him his sufferings, and he will feel that *half the world is lost to him*. Lay him on a soft silken couch, he will nevertheless groan sleepless\* under the pressure of his sufferings ; while the miserable beggar, blessed with health, sleeps sweetly on the hard ground. Spread his tables with dainty meats and choice drinks, and he will thrust back the hand that proffers them, and *envy the poor man who thoroughly enjoys his dry crust*. Surround him with the pomp of kings ; let his chair be\* a throne and *his crutch a world-swaying sceptre* ; he will look with contemptuous eye on marble, on gold, and on purple, and would deem himself happy could he enjoy, *even were it under a thatched roof*, the health of the meanest of his servants.

## EXERCISES.

1. Express the main idea of the above passage in one short phrase.
2. Give a summary of the passage in a couple of short sentences.
3. Explain the parts in italics.
4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
5. Analyse the last sentence.
6. What is the force of the imperatives 'Give', 'Lay', 'Spread' and 'Surround' in the third and following sentences ?

When Napoleon, with his army of invasion, lay at Boulogne, an English sailor who had been captured tried to escape in a little raft or skiff which he had *patched together* with bits of wood and the bark of trees. Hearing\* of his attempt, Napoleon ordered him to be\* brought into his presence, and asked if he really meant to cross the Channel in such a *crazy contrivance*. "Yes, and if you will let me, I am

still willing to try\*". "You must have a sweet-heart whom you are so anxious to re-visit\*". "No", said the young man, "I only wish to see my mother who is old and infirm". "And you shall see her", was the reply, "and take to her this money from me ; for she must be a good mother who has such an affectionate son". And orders were given to send\* the sailor *with a flag* on board the first British *cruiser* which came near enough\*.

## EXERCISES.

1. Rewrite the above story in your own words.
2. Give a suitable title to the above story.
3. Explain the words and phrases in italics.
4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
5. What is the force of *shall* in the sentence, "And you shall see her"?
6. Analyse the first sentence.
7. Change the direct into indirect, and the indirect into direct speech.

## 59

Did you ever see the horses taken to water ? They rush into some beautiful stream or tranquil lake, and drink of it *to their heart's content* ; after which they *turn their backs upon it*, or stamp in it with their feet, until the water is polluted. This is the price they pay for their *refreshing draught*. But what, then, does\* the noble river ? It immediately floats away the mud, and continues after, as\* it was before\*, full and *free of access* for the same or other thirsty creatures. And so\* must you also do. If there be a *fountain of genuine charity in your heart*, it will constantly and spontaneously overflow, whether those who drink of it are thankful or not. He is a *senseless husbandman* who expects to reap\* the pro-

duce of his seed before\* the harvest. This life is the season for sowing\* and scattering ; we shall reap hereafter\*.

## EXERCISES.

1. Frame a suitable heading for the above passage.
2. Give the general meaning of it in your own words.
3. In what way does the author advise you to act like the river ?
4. Explain fully the comparison employed in the last sentence.
5. Give the meaning of the phrases in italics.
6. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
7. Analyse the last sentence but one.

---

 60

When the absent are spoken of, some will speak gold\* of them, some silver, some iron, some lead, and some always *speak dirt*, for they have a natural attraction towards what is evil, and think it shows *penetration* in them. As\* a cat watching for mice does not look up though an elephant goes by\*, so\* are they so\* busy *mousing\** *for defects* that they let great excellences pass\* them unnoticed. I will not say it is not Christain *to make\** *beads of others' faults and tell them over every day\** ; I say it is infernal. If you want to know how the devil feels, you do know if you are such an one.

## EXERCISES.

1. What is the author attacking in the above passage ?
  2. Give a summary of the passage in one sentence.
  3. What do the different metals, gold, silver, iron, and lead, mentioned in the first sentence, represent ?
  4. Explain in detail the simile of the cat in the second sentence.
  5. Explain the phrases in italics.
  6. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
  7. Analyse the second and the last sentence.
-

When Napoleon returned to his place, immediately after his defeat at Waterloo, he continued many hours without taking\* any refreshment. One of the *grooms of the chamber* ventured to serve up some coffee in his cabinet by the hands of a child whom Napoleon *had occasionally distinguished by his notice*. The emperor sat motionless, with his hands spread\* over his eyes. The page stood patiently before him, gazing\* with infantine curiosity on *an image which presented so strong a contrast to his own figure of simplicity and peace*. At last the little attendant presented his tray, exclaiming *in the familiarity of an age which knows so little distinctions*—"Eat sire ; it will do you good". The emperor looked at him, and asked, "Do you not belong to Gonesse ?" (a village\* near Paris)—"No, sire, I come from Pierrefite". "Where your parents have a cottage and some acres of land ?" "Yes, sire". "There is happiness", replied the man who was still the emperor of France and king of Italy.

## EXERCISES.

1. What fact or truth does the above story illustrate ? State this in the form of a suitable heading.
2. Rewrite the story in your own words.
3. Explain the parts in italics.
4. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
5. Change the direct into indirect speech.

A thoughtful kind answer is almost omnipotent. It not only makes a friend still more friendly, but it subdues the wildest passion and the deepest prejudice of the greatest



enemy. The cowardly become brave under its *inspiring\** influence, and the brave are *nerved by it to nobler deeds* and mightier exploits. And yet, though it is so soothing, enchanting and potential, *it costs the utterer nothing*. This, therefore, is the right way to answer\*; and were it universally adopted, many a tear would be unshed, many a passion be unprovoked, and many a friend be retained.

## EXERCISES.

1. How may a thoughtful kind answer be said to be 'almost omnipotent'?
2. Distinguish between 'soothing', 'enchanting', and 'potential.'
3. What results would be achieved if the right way to answer were "universally adopted"?
4. Explain the phrases in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.

## 63

Fasting\*, too much neglected and decried among us, is a good and beautiful institution. It *gives a more tangible form to* ideas that should habitually dominate us,—those\* of our unworthiness and our dependence. It restores to mind what it takes away from matter, and by relieving\*, in a manner, the soul that is generally *oppressed with the burden of the flesh*, it facilitates its soaring\* up towards the *objects of the invisible world*. Finally\*, by the *voluntary privations* it imposes, it increases our compassion for the *involuntary privations* of so many of our brethren, *whose life, alas ! is one perpetual fast*.

## EXERCISES.

1. State in your own words, as briefly and clearly as you can, what the author here says with regard to fasting.

2. Explain clearly—"It restores to mind what it takes away from matter".
3. What is the exact force of the phrase "too much" in the first sentence ?
4. What class of people are referred to in the last sentence ?
5. Explain the parts in italics.
6. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
7. Analyse the third sentence.

---

 64

There is a story which tells us of a bell which was suspended on a rock of the ocean *dangerous to navigation*. The waves of the ocean beating upon it caused it to give\* a noise of warning\* *to keep off\* the approaching\* mariner*. It is said that at one time some pirates destroyed the bell to prevent\* the warning. Not long after\*, these very\* pirates struck upon this rock, and were lost. How many there are who *take pains to hush\* or remove the voice of warning* coming forth from the point of danger, who, as soon as the warning ceases, *founder upon the rock\* of temptation, and are lost for ever !*

## EXERCISES.

1. Write in your words the story of the bell fastened on a rock.
  2. What moral reflection does the author draw from the above story ? Quote any saying that you know pointing to the above moral.
  3. Point out in detail the comparison drawn in the last sentence.
  4. Explain the parts in italics.
  5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
  6. Analyse the last sentence.
-

We are supposed to live\* in an age of free and active thought. As\* to the amount of thought *for which the age takes credit to itself* there may be some doubt, but all will admit that we live in an age of *free and active talk\**, in which political, social and religious subjects are being perpetually discussed. The discussion of such subjects *calls forth many bad feelings and bad words*. Even temperance cannot be advocated by some, except\* in the most *disgracefully intemperate language*. Anger, uncharitableness, intolerance prevail most terribly by reason of our differences on political and religious questions, and *hard words are used and hard names are called*.

## EXERCISES.

1. What is the author deploring in the above passage?
2. Give a short summary of the above passage in your own words.
3. What is the difference between "free and active thought" and "free and active talk"?
4. Explain clearly the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
6. Analyse the second sentence.

A lady invited Dean Swift to a most *sumptuous dinner*. She said, "Dear Dean, this fish is not as good as I could wish, though I sent for it *half\* across\* the kingdom*, and it cost me so much\*", naming an *incredible price*. "And this thing is not such\* as\* I ought to have\* for such\* a guest, though it came from such a place, and cost such a sum." Thus she went on, *decrying and underrating every article of her expensive*

*and ostentatious dinner* and teasing her distinguished guest with apologies, only to find\* *a chance to display\* her vanity*, in bringing her trouble and expense into view, until she *exhausted his patience*. He is reported to have\* risen in a passion and to have said, "True\*, madam, it is a miserable dinner ; and I will not eat it, but go home and dine upon sixpence worth\* of herring."

## EXERCISES.

1. Rewrite the above story in your own words.
2. Frame a suitable heading for this story.
3. Explain the parts in italics.
4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
5. Analyse the second sentence.

A man who cultivates skill and knowledge in his own trade benefits himself and his country in three ways. To begin\* with he is a happier man for so\* doing. The man who works without any thought of what he is about\* is like a slave or an animal, and has none of the pleasure which is gained by knowing\* how this effect springs from that cause, and how one thing depends upon another. Labour, when it is joined to intelligence and interest, is ennobling and makes men far happier than idleness. Labour, performed like a machine and without knowledge, is deadening and stupefying. Next, he increases the national wealth, and so benefits both himself and his country. Lastly, his example helps to show others the advantage of applying\* skill and knowledge to the work in hand. Very few men are born without the power to acquire\* skill and knowledge.



## EXERCISES.

1. Enumerate the three ways in which a man who cultivates skill and knowledge benefits himself and his country.
2. What are the two kinds of labour contrasted in the above passage? What are the effects of each kind?
3. Give one word for "without any thought of what he is about."
4. Rewrite the last sentence in an affirmative form.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the sentence, "the man who works.....another."

---

 68

No country in the world gives one\* so great *a sense of age* as\* Egypt, and although it has many beauties, and *the life of the people to-day is most picturesque*, as\* we will presently see, it is its extreme antiquity *which most excites the imagination*, for while the whole Bible history covers a period of only 2,000 years, the known\* history of Egypt commenced as far back\* as 6,000 years ago\*. From the sphinx at Ghizeh, which is *so ancient that no one knows its origin*, to the great dam at Assuon, monument\* of its present day, each period of its history has left some record, some tomb or temple, which we may study, and it is this more than anything else\* which makes Egypt so attractive to thoughtful people.

## EXERCISES.

1. Why is Egypt such a centre of interest for thoughtful people?
2. Explain the parts in italics.
3. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
4. Give a clause analysis of both sentences in the passage.

---

 69

An Indian juggler once visited the camp of General Napier and performed his feats. Among other performances

this man cut in two with a stroke of his sword a lime or lemon placed in the hand of his assistant. Napier thought there was *some collusion between the juggler and his retainer*. To determine\* the point, he *offered his own hand for the experiment*. The juggler looked attentively at the hand and said he would not make the trial. "*I thought I should find you out !*" exclaimed Napier. "But stop," added the other, "let me see your left hand." The left hand was submitted, and the man then said firmly, "If you will hold your arm steady\* I will perform the feat." "But why the left hand and not the right?" asked the General. "Because your right hand is hollow in the centre, and there is a risk of cutting off the thumb; the left is high, and the danger will be less." Napier was startled. However he put the lime on his hand, and held out his arm steadily. The juggler *balanced himself* and with a swift stroke cut the lime in two pieces.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Rewrite the above story in your own words.
2. What name is given to a story like the above?
3. Frame a suitable title for the story.
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Change the direct into indirect speech.

In the most ordinary affairs—in the *business or calling by which we live*—at home or abroad\*—we must take heed of the value of time, keep watch over it, and *be punctual to others as well as to ourselves*. Without punctuality, indeed, men are kept in a perpetual state of worry, trouble and annoyance.

*Punctuality is said to be the politeness of kings.* It is also the politeness of subjects. When a certain nobleman, who had *made an appointment* with George III, went to his Majesty too late, the king made a remark upon his unpunctuality ; on which the nobleman replied, "Better late\* than never\*." "No," said the king, "that is a mistake ; I say, better never than late."

## EXERCISES.

1. Give a suitable heading to the above story.
2. Explain the parts italicised.
3. Point out the difference between the proverb 'Better late than never' and its inversion 'Better never than late'.
4. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
5. Analyse the sentence beginning "When a certain nobleman..."

## 71

November 6th—The weather is as peaceful to-day, as calm and as mild, as\* in early April ; and, perhaps, an autumn afternoon and a spring morning do resemble each other more in feeling and even in appearance than any two periods of the year. There is in both the same *freshness and dewiness of the herbage* ; the same *balmy softness* in the air ; and the same pure and lovely sky, with white *fleecy clouds* floating across it. The chief difference lies in the absence of flowers, and the presence of leaves. But then the foliage of November is so rich, and glowing, and varied, that it may well supply the place of the gay blossoms of the spring ; whilst all the flowers of the field or the garden could never *make amends* for the want of leaves,—that beautiful and *graceful attire\** in which Nature has clothed the rugged forms of trees—the

*verdant drapery*\* to which the landscape owes its loveliness, and the forest their glory\*.

#### EXERCISES.

1. In what respects do an autumn afternoon and spring morning resemble each other and in what respects do they differ ?
  2. Explain the parts in italics.
  3. Parse the words marked by an asterisk.
  4. Analyse the last sentence.
- 

#### 72

Action is *at once the destiny and the lot of man*. All the conditions of his existence are framed upon the supposition of his activity. It is so\* in man's *physical frame*. The elastic foot is for speed ; the firm lithe limb for endurance ; the arm, *at once supple and sinewy*, for toil ; the eye and the ear are for their respective revelries in sight and sound. It is so in our mental constitution. By the active exercise of the powers which God has given us we classify objects and understand truths. It is so in our moral nature. The power by which we distinguish between right and wrong : an *instinct of worship* which, however\* we may *brutalise*, we cannot wholly stifle\* ; *yearnings after a nobler life*, which no debauchery can extinguish nor murder absolutely kill — these\* are all implanted within us by the *Giver of every good and perfect gift*.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Give a brief summary of the above passage.
2. By what arguments does the author prove that "action is at once the destiny and the lot of man" ?
3. Give one word for "the power by which we distinguish between right and wrong".



4. Explain the parts in italics.
  5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
  6. Analyse the last sentence.
- 

## 73

The *inward persuasion* that we are free to do\*, or not to do a thing, is but\* a mere illusion. If we *trace the true principles of our actions*, we shall find that they are always *necessary consequences of our volitions and desires*, which are never in our power. You think yourself free, because you do what you will ; but are you free to will or not to will, to desire or not to desire ? Are not your volitions and desires necessarily excited by objects or qualities *totally independent of you* ? But, you will say, "I feel free." This is an illusion, that\* may be compared to that\* of the fly in the fable, who, lighting upon the pole of a heavy carriage, *applauded himself for directing\* its course*. Man who thinks himself free is a fly, who imagines he has *power to move\* the universe*, while he is himself unknowingly carried along by it.

## EXERCISES.

1. Give an appropriate title to the above passage.
  2. Write a short summary of it in your own words.
  3. In what respect has man been compared to the fly in the fable ?
  4. Explain the parts in italics.
  5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
  6. Analyse the last sentence.
- 

## 74

Each succeeding age and generation leaves behind it a peculiar character, which *stands out in relief upon its annals*,

and is associated with it for ever in the memory of posterity. One is signalised for the invention of gunpowder, another for that\* of printing\* ; one is *rendered memorable* by the revival of letters, another by the reformation of religion ; one is marked in history by the conquests of Napoleon, another is rendered illustrious by discoveries of Newton. If we are asked by what characteristic the present age will be marked in future records, we answer, by the *miracles which have been wrought in the subjugation of the powers of the material world to the uses of the human race*. In this respect no former epoch *can approach to competition with it*.

## EXERCISES.

1. What is the main idea of the above passage ?
2. What, according to the author, is the peculiar characteristic of the present age ?
3. Explain the parts in italics.
4. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
5. Analyse the last sentence but one.

## 75

Franc's Xavier sometimes received *in the prosecution of his zealous labours* the most mortifying treatment. As\* he was preaching in one of the cities of Japan some of the multitude *made sport of him*. One, more wanton than the rest, went to him while he addressed the people, *feigning\* that he had something to communicate\* in private*. Upon his approach, Xavier leaned his head to learn\* what he had to say. The scorner thus gained his object, which was to spit freely upon the face of the devoted missionary, and thus insult\* him in the most public manner. The father, without

speaking a word, or making the least sign of anger or emotion, took out his handkerchief, wiped his face, and continued his discourse, as\* if nothing had occurred. By such a *heroic control of his passions*, the scorn of the audience was turned into admiration.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Give an appropriate heading to this story.
2. Rewrite the story in your own words.
3. Explain the parts in italics.
4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
5. Analyse the third sentence.

---

#### 76

In social life Wesley was *lively and communicative*. He had been much among men ; he was full of anecdotes and experiences, which he related willingly, and what\* is not of less importance, well\*. He could be very cheerful and pleasant. *His elasticity of spirits communicated itself to others*, and suffered so little\* beneath the weakness of age or the approach of death, *that no one could think\* he had been as happy in his twentieth as he was in his eightieth year*. His temperance was remarkable ; in his early life he *carried it much too far*. He commenced fasts and other *forms of self-denial* at Oxford, and indulged in but\* little sleep, but toward the close of his life he *relaxed somewhat\* from this rigid regimen*. In thirty-five years he did not have to lie in bed one day.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Describe in your own words the different points in the character of Wesley as brought out in the above passage.
2. Who was Wesley?

3. Explain the parts in italics clearly.
  4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
  5. Analyse the sentence beginning "His elasticity of spirits...".
- 

## 77

Before our great cotton and cloth factories arose, *one of the principal employments in every house was the fabrication of clothing\** : every family made its own\*. The wool was spun into thread by the girls, who were therefore called *spinsters* ; the thread was woven into cloth by their mother, who accordingly was called the weaver, or the wife : and *another remnant\* of this old truth we discover in the word "heirloom,"* applied to any old piece of furniture which has come down to us from our ancestors, and which, though it may be a chair or a bed, shows that a loom was once a most important article in every house. Thus the word "wife" means weaver ; and in the word itself is wrapped up a hint of *earnest, indoor, stay-at-home occupations*, as\* being fitted for her who bears this name.

## EXERCISES.

1. What is the derivation of the word "wife" as given above ?
  2. What inference can we draw from the derivation of the word "heirloom" ?
  3. Give the original and the modern meaning of the word "spinster".
  4. Explain the parts in italics.
  5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
  6. Analyse the second sentence.
- 

## 78

The purity of moral habits is, I am afraid, of very little use to a man unless it is accompanied with *that degree of*



*firmness* which enables him to act\* up to what he may think right, *inspite of solicitation to the contrary*. Very few young men have the *power of self-denial* in any great degree at first. It increases with the increase of confidence, and with the experience of those inconveniences which result from the absence of this virtue. Every young man must be exposed to temptation : *he cannot learn the ways of men without being witness to their vices*. If you attempt to preserve\* him from danger by keeping\* him out of the way of it, you render him quite unfit for any style of life in which he may be placed. The great point is, *not to turn him out too soon, and to give\* him a pilot at first*.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Express the main idea of the above passage in a single sentence.
2. How does the "power of self-denial" increase in young men ?
3. What are the two ways of saving young men from vice, and which is the better of the two ?
4. Explain fully the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the first sentence.

Biographies of great, but especially\* of good men, are most instructive and useful as\* helps, guides, and incentives to others. Some of the best are *almost equivalent to gospels*—teaching high living, high thinking, and energetic action for their own and the world's good. British biography is *studded over as\* with "patines of bright gold," with illustrious examples* of the power of self-help, of patient purpose, resolute working\*, and steadfast integrity, issuing in the formation of truly noble and manly character ; exhibiting, *in language not*

*to be misunderstood\**, what it is in the power of each to accomplish\* for himself ; and illustrating the efficacy of self-respect and self-reliance in enabling\* men of even the humblest rank *to work\* out for themselves an honourable competency and a solid reputation.*

## EXERCISES.

1. What are the uses of biographies ?
2. What are the lessons we can learn from the lives of great and good Englishmen ?
3. What exactly is meant by "high living" and "high thinking" ?
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the last sentence, carefully showing the different clauses.

## 80

Water, which is one of the great necessities of life, may in general be *gratuitously procured* ; but it has been well observed that if bread, the other great necessary\* of human life, could be *procured on terms equally cheap and easy*, there would be much more reason to fear\* that men would become brutes *for the want of something to do\**, rather than Philosophers\* *from the possession of leisure.*

## EXERCISES.

1. Give the meaning of the above sentence as clearly as you can.
2. Frame a suitable title for the above extract.
3. What are the three great "necessaries of life" ?
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
6. Analyse the whole sentence.

When a path is once made, men are naturally disposed to follow\* it, even though it be not the most convenient; numbers will enlarge and widen, or even make it straighter and easier; but *it is odds* they do not alter its course. To deviate\* from it is chiefly for *the ignorant or the irregular*, persons\* who do not well know it, or are too licentious to keep\* it. And hence the alterations and improvements made in the several arts are chiefly owing to people of those characters. *There is scarce a more powerful principle in nature than that\* of imitation*, which not only leads us to do *what* we see others do\*, but *as* they do it.

## EXERCISES.

1. What is the main idea of the above passage?
2. Frame a suitable heading for it.
3. Bring out the exact force of the words 'what' and 'as' in the last line of the passage.
4. Explain the parts italicised.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the last sentence.

The definition of good prose is—proper words in their proper places;—of good verse—the most proper words in their proper places. *The propriety is in either case relative.* The words in prose ought to express\* the intended meaning, and no more; *if they attract attention to themselves*, it is in general a fault. In the very best styles, as Southey's, you read page after page, understanding the author perfectly, without once *taking notice of the medium of communication*; it is as if\* he had been speaking to you all the while. But in

verse you must do more: there the words, the *media\**, must be beautiful, and ought to attract your notice, *yet not so much and so perpetually as to destroy the unity* which ought to result from the whole poem.

#### EXERCISES.

1. What is the chief difference between the styles of prose and verse, as set forth in the above passage?
2. Explain fully the parts in italics.
3. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
4. Analyse the last sentence.

#### 83

*Write it on your heart* that every day is the best day in the year. No man has learnt anything rightly *until he knows that every day is Doomsday*. 'Tis the old secret of the gods that they come in low disguises. 'Tis *the vulgar great* who come dizen\* with gold and jewels. Real kings hide away their crowns in their wardrobes, and *affect a plain and poor exterior*. In daily life, what distinguishes the master is the using\* those materials he has, instead of looking about for what\* are more renowned, or what others have used well. Do not refuse the employment *which the hour brings you* for one\* more ambitious. *The highest heaven of wisdom is alike\** near from every point, and thou must find it, if at all, *by methods native to thyself alone\**.

#### EXERCISES.

1. What lesson is the author trying to impress in the above passage?
2. Explain clearly the meaning of the sentence, "'Tis the old secret of the gods that they come in low disguises".
3. Why does the author urge us not to refuse the employment "which the hour brings"?



4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the sentence beginning, "In daily life what distinguishes..."

---

 84

When I was a child seven years old, my friends, on a holiday, filled my pockets with coppers. I went directly to a shop where they sold toys for children, and being charmed with the sound of a whistle that I met by the way in the hands of another boy, I *voluntarily offered him all my money for one\**. I then came home\*, and went whistling all\* over the house, much pleased\* with my whistle, but disturbing all the family. My brothers, sisters and cousins, *understanding the bargain I had made*, told me I had given four times\* as much for it as\* it was worth\*. This put me in mind what good things I might have bought with the rest of the money; and they laughed at me so much for my folly, that I cried with vexation, and *the reflection gave me more chagrin than the whistle gave me pleasure*. This, however, was afterwards of use to me, *the impression\* continuing on my mind*; so that often, when I was tempted to buy\* some unnecessary thing, I said to myself "Don't give too much for the whistle"; and so I saved my money.

## EXERCISES.

1. What lesson is the above story intended to illustrate?
  2. What does the word *whistle* stand for in the sentence "Don't give too much for the whistle"?
  3. Explain the parts in italics.
  4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
  5. Analyse the sentence, "This put me in mind...pleasure."
-

There are men who pride themselves upon their gruffness, and though they may possess virtue and capacity, their manner is often such\* *as\* to render\* them insupportable*. It is difficult to like\* a man who, though he may not pull your nose, *habitually wounds your self-respect*, and takes a pride in saying\* disagreeable things to you. There are others who are *dreadfully condescending\**, and cannot avoid seizing\* upon every small opportunity of *making their greatness felt\**. When Dr. Abernethy was *canvassing* for the office of surgeon to St. Bartholomew Hospital he *called upon* such a person—a rich grocer\*, who was one of the governors of the hospital. The great man behind the counter seeing the great surgeon enter\*, immediately *assumed the grand air* towards the *supposed supplicant* for his vote. "I presume, sir, you want my vote and interest at this *momentous epoch* of your life." Abernethy, who hated *humbugs*, and felt *nettled* at the tone, replied, "No. I don't: I want a pennyworth of figs: come, look sharp and wrap them up: I want *to be off*".

## EXERCISES.

1. Give a suitable heading to the above passage.
2. Write a brief summary of it in your own words.
3. Explain the phrases in italics clearly.
4. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
5. Analyse the first sentence.
6. Rewrite the last two sentences in the indirect form of narration.

The fact that popular proverbs please the people, and have pleased them for ages; that they *possess so vigorous a principle*

*of life as\* to have maintained their ground, ever new and ever young, through all the centuries of a nation's existence,—may\* that many of them have pleased not one nation only, but many, so that they have made themselves\* a home in the most different lands, and further\*, that they have, not a few\* of them, come down to us from the remotest antiquity, borne\* safely upon the waters of that great stream of time, which has swallowed so much beneath its waves ; all this, I think, may well make us pause\*, should we be tempted to turn\* away from them with anything of indifference or disdain.*

## EXERCISES.

1. Name the considerations that should induce us not to despise popular proverbs.
2. Explain the metaphor in the phrase "borne safely upon the waters of that great stream of time which has swallowed so much beneath its waves".
3. Explain the phrases in italics carefully.
4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
5. Give a clause analysis of the whole.

Almost all our good things—our most precious vegetables, our noblest animals, our loveliest flowers, our arts, our religious and philosophical ideas, have travelled to us from the East. *In an historical as well as in a physical sense, the East is the land of the morning.* Perhaps the simple reason of this may be that when the Earth first began to move on her\* axis, her Asiatic side was towards the sun—*her Eastern cheek first blushed under his rays.* And so\* this priority of sunshine, like the\* first move in chess, *gave the East the precedence, though not*

*the pre-eminence*, in all things ; just\* as the garden slope that fronts the morning sun *yields the earliest seedlings*, though these seedlings may *attain a hardier and more luxuriant growth* by\* being transplanted.

## EXERCISES.

1. Why is it that "almost all good things" came first to the East?
2. Explain the two comparisons employed in the last sentence.
3. Give the meaning of the parts in italics.
4. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
5. Analyse the last sentence.

The true gentleman carefully avoids whatever\* may *cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast*—all clashing\* of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom or resentment ; his great concern\* being to make\* every one *at his ease and at home*. He *has his eyes on all the company* ; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd ; he can recollect to whom he is speaking ; he guards against *unseasonable allusions*, or topics which may irritate ; he is seldom prominent in conversation and never wearisome. He *makes light of favours* while he does them, and *seems to be receiving when he is conferring*. He never speaks of himself except\* when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort ; he *has no ears for slander or gossip* ; is *scrupulous in imputing\** motives to those who interfere with him, and *interprets every-thing for the best*.



## EXERCISES.

1. Enumerate in your own words the various qualities of a gentleman such as is described in the above passage.
2. "He can recollect to whom he is speaking". What gentlemanly qualities does this imply?
3. "He never defends himself by a mere retort". How then does he defend himself? What is a "retort"?
4. Explain the parts in italics carefully.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the last sentence.

No one, who has paid any attention to the peculiar features of the present era, will doubt for a moment that we are living in *an age of most wonderful transition*, which tends rapidly to accomplish\* that great end to which indeed all history points—the *realisation\** of the *unity of mankind*—not a unity\* which *breaks down the limits and levels*, the peculiar characteristics of the different nations of the earth, but rather *a unity the result\* and product of those very\* national varieties and antagonistic qualities*.

## EXERCISES.

1. Express the main idea of the above in one short sentence.
  2. What, according to the author, is the great end to which all history points?
  3. What kind of unity is it that the present age is tending to establish?
  4. Explain the parts in italics carefully.
  5. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
  6. Give a clause analysis of the whole.
-

When Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, was making great preparations for his intended invasion of Italy, Cineas, the philosopher\*, said to him, "The Romans, sir, are reported to be\* a warlike and victorious people; but if God permit us to overcome\* them, what use shall we make of the victory?" Pyrrhus replied, "The Romans\* once conquered, no city will resist us; we shall then be masters of all Italy." Cineas added, "And having subdued Italy, what shall we do next?" Pyrrhus replied, "Sicily then *stretches out her arms to receive\* us*". "That is very probable", said Cineas, "but will the possession of Sicily put an end to the war?" "God grant\* us success in that", answered Pyrrhus, "and we shall *make these only the forerunners of greater things*, for then Lybia and Carthage will soon be ours; and these things\* being completed, none of our enemies *can offer us any further resistance*." "Very true", added Cineas, "for then we may easily regain Macedon, and make an absolute conquest of Greece; and when all these are in our possession, what shall we do then?" Pyrrhus smiling answered, "Why, then, my dear friend, we will *live at our ease*, drink all day long, and amuse ourselves with cheerful conversation." "Well, sir", said Cineas, "and *why may we not do all this now?*"

## EXERCISES.

1. Rewrite the above story in your own words as briefly as you can.
2. Give a suitable heading to the above story.
3. What do you think is the moral of the story?
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Rewrite the whole, using the indirect form of narration.

The *moral effect of aliment* is clearly evinced in the different tempers of the *carnivorous and the frugivorous animals* ; the former, whose destructive passions, like those of ignorant men, lay waste all within their reach, are constantly tormented with hunger *which returns and rages in proportion to their own devastation* ; this creates that state of warfare or disquietude *which seeks, as\* in murderers, the night and veil of the forest* ; for should\* they appear on the plain, their prey escapes, or seen by each other, their warfare begins. The frugivorous animals wander tranquilly on the plains, and *testify their joyful existence by frisking\* and basking in the congenial rays of the sun*, or browsing with convulsive pleasure on the green herb, evinced\* by the motion of the tail, or the joyful sparkling of the eyes, and the gambols of the herd. The same effect of aliment is discernible amongst the different species of man, and the peaceful temper of the frugivorous Asiatic is strongly contrasted with the ferocious temper of the carnivorous European.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Describe in your own words the "moral effect of aliment" on (1) animals, and (2) man.
2. What exactly is meant by the "moral effect of aliment" ?
3. In what respects may carnivorous animals be compared to ignorant men ?
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
6. Analyse the first sentence.

There has been considerable difference of opinion in regard to the effects produced upon the mind by *fictitious narratives*. *Without entering\* minutely upon the merits of this controversy*, I think it may be contended that two evils are likely to arise\* from much indulgence in works of fiction. The one is a tendency *to give\* way to the wild play of the imagination*, a practice\* *most deleterious both to the intellectual and moral habits*. The other is a *disruption of the harmony* which ought to exist between the moral emotions and the conduct—a principle\* of extensive and important influence. In the healthy state of the moral feelings, for example, the emotion of sympathy excited by a tale of sorrow ought to be followed by some efforts for the relief of the sufferer. When such relations in real life are listened to from time to time without any such efforts, the emotion gradually becomes weakened and that moral condition is produced which we call selfishness or *darkness of heart*.

#### EXERCISES.

1. Name in your own words the two evils likely to arise from much indulgence in works of fiction.
2. What is meant by "harmony" between the moral emotions and conduct?
3. Explain the parts in italics.
4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
5. Analyse the second sentence.

If we *survey the various classes and conditions of society*, we shall find few so honourable, so important, so fruitful in



usefulness, as\* that\* of the proprietor of land. Other men *must struggle with the world* before they raise themselves into distinction and influence ; he, on the contrary, is *born a ruler\* of the people* ; his opinions become in many ways the model of theirs and *his power can make itself felt* within the walls of the poorest cottage, in diffusing\* sorrow or disseminating joy. How many are the opportunities which such a situation affords to a noble mind for the *exercise of active virtue* ! How many are the blessings which even common kindness may diffuse ! Let landlords therefore be\* the fathers of their people, exerting\* that *exalted charity* which is not satisfied with relieving\* poverty, but prevents it ; which imparts to the young the means of instruction, and awakens in manhood the spirit of industry.

## EXERCISES.

1. In what respects do proprietors of land differ from other people ?
2. What, according to the author, should be the duty of landlords towards their people ?
3. With what phrase is "exalted charity" contrasted in the preceding sentence ?
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.

The world is not necessarily a "*vale of tears*." God never intended it to be\* so\* to any one. All his arrangements are *with an opposite design*, and, to be fulfilled\*, only need *man's response and co-operation*. True\*, in his all-wise Providence, he sends trouble upon men, and grievous ones\* ; but they are never so great as\* those\* they bring upon themselves and willingly suffer. What our experience of life shall be

rests mainly with ourselves. The world may render us unfortunate, but it cannot make us miserable ; if we are so, the fault lies in our own bosoms. *It is not only the great who order their own circumstances.* On the wide, wild sea of human life, as\* on that where go the ships, the winds and the waves are always on the side of the clever sailor.

## EXERCISES.

1. Give the main idea of the above passage in a single short sentence.
2. Frame a suitable heading for the passage.
3. "The world may render us unfortunate, but it cannot make us miserable." Explain this, so as clearly to bring out the difference between 'unfortunate' and 'miserable'.
4. Expand the metaphor used in the last sentence.
5. Explain the parts in italics.
6. Parse the words marked with an asterisk.
7. Analyse the sentence beginning "True in his all-wise Providence..."

One reason why we meet with so few people who are reasonable and agreeable in conversation is, that there is scarcely any body who does not think more of what\* he has to say\* than of answering\* what is said to him. Even those who have the most *address* and politeness think they do enough\* if they only seem to be\* attentive ; at the same time *their eyes and their minds betray a distraction* as\* to\* what is addressed to them, and an impatience to return\* to what they themselves were saying ; not reflecting that to be thus\* *studious of pleasing\* themselves* is but\* a poor way of *pleasing or convincing others* ; and that to hear\* patiently and answer precisely are the great perfections of conversation.

## EXERCISES.

1. Why is it that agreeableness in conversation is so rare a quality?
  2. What, according to the author, constitutes "perfection in conversation"?
  3. Explain the words and phrases in italics.
  4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
  5. Analyse the first as well as the second sentence.
- 

## 96

That a man should lament at having\* to die\*, be it soon or late, *indicates neither philosophy nor religion*. No one who is *in a right state of mind* ever even thinks about death. He thinks only\* of his life, knowing that *if this be properly regulated and developed*, death, come\* when it may\*, will but\* invigorate and renew him. It would be difficult to find a greater or more *pernicious error* than that so often propounded as "religious", that men should be always *looking forward to their "end"*. They should never be looking forward to their end; they should be *too intent upon their present*. True religion does not concern itself as to how and when men die, but as to *the quality of their current life*. Men are not saved according to\* how they die, but according to how they live. *Death takes no man unprepared*, whenever it may come, wherever he may be, or however employed.

## EXERCISES.

1. What is the main idea of the above passage?
2. What is the mistake which the author is trying to correct in the above passage?
3. Explain the phrases in italics.
4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
5. Analyse the sentence beginning "*It would be difficult.....*".

The love of gain has a powerful influence in forming\* the habit of lying\*. It is impossible to enter\* much into the busy world or trade and commerce without being\* convinced of this. False statements, *delusive promises and pledges* are given; *adulterated wares are warranted as\* genuine*, and a thousand tricks and artifices are contrived, solely to secure\* high profits. He who in his first attempts of this kind happens to succeed is strongly tempted to *push\* his adventurous course into all the dark and detested practices of villainy*. But those who are commencing such a course would do well to pause\* and ask themselves *whether the object they propose is likely, in the long run, to be attained by these dishonourable means*.

## EXERCISES.

1. How, according to the author of this passage, does the habit of lying originate? What proof does he give in support of his opinion?
2. Give the purport of the above passage in one sentence.
3. Explain the parts in italics.
4. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
5. Analyse the last sentence.

Aim at independence of mind. There are some men who *go in leading strings* all their days. They always *follow in the paths of others*, without being able to give\* any reason for their opinions. There is a proper mental independence which all should maintain: self-respect and the stability of our character require it. The man who *pins his opinions entirely on another's sleeve* can have no respect for his own judgment and is likely to be a *changeling*. When we consider carefully



what appeals to our minds, and exercise upon it our own reason, taking into respectful consideration what others say upon it, and then come to a conclusion of our own, we act as\* intelligent beings should act, and only\* then. This proper independence of mind is *far removed from presumptuous self-confidence*, than\* which there is nothing more severely to be condemned. *Presumption is the associate of ignorance*; and it is hateful in the extreme\* to hear\* some *half-taught stripling* delivering his opinions *with all the authority of an oracle*.

#### EXERCISES.

1. What exactly does the author mean here by "independence of mind"?
2. What is the opposite of "independence of mind"?
3. Why is it necessary that we should maintain a proper mental independence?
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the sentence beginning "When we consider carefully..."

Of all the sublime objects which Nature, *in her infinitely varying appearances*, is constantly offering to our view, there is none which excites in the mind such lofty ideas of her real majesty and grandeur as the sea. Other objects in nature are capable of exciting\* these feelings, but not to so great an extent. The sea, *stretched out in its mighty expanse*, gives us the *notion of immensity* more completely than any other object\* which Nature can offer. Nor is there *in the whole range of Nature* a grander or more magnificent scene than the ocean in a storm, when deep calls into deep, and its *liquid*

*mountains* roll and break against each other, when it dashes to pieces, *in the wantonness of its power*, the strongest structures which man can rear for the purpose of floating over its billows; then it\* is that the proudest and bravest tremble and quail at the roaring\* and thunder of its waters.

## EXERCISES.

1. Why is the sea called the grandest object in nature?
2. What does the sea do in a storm?
3. Give an appropriate heading to the passage.
4. Explain the parts in italics.
5. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
6. Analyse the last sentence.

## 100

We may divide society into those who are assisting the progress of civilisation, those who are *driving it backwards towards barbarism*, and those who, being *inert and stationary*, are an impediment to the efforts of others. We must choose to which\* of these classes we wish to belong, for to one or other it\* is evident we must belong. If we are vicious, or even ignorant and prejudiced, so that in our intercourse with society we *foster old errors*, and resist the improvements of the age, we must rank with those who are either impeding the prosperity of the country or forcing it back to barbarism. But if we think, speak, and act up to *the moral rights of our time*, assisting more or less to maintain\* or forward improvement, we have then a right to *rank\* with the benefactors of mankind*. Our positive influence may be greater or less, without either merit or fault of our own, but we have joined the right cause. Each soldier has a share in the honour of the victory,

EXERCISES.

1. Into what three classes may society be divided?
  2. How can we be regarded as forcing the age "back to barbarism"?
  3. How can we be regarded as "benefactors of mankind"?
  4. Expand the comparison suggested in the last sentence of the passage.
  5. Explain the phrases in italics.
  6. Parse the words followed by an asterisk.
  7. Analyse the sentence beginning " If we are vicious.....".
-